THE HISTORY OF Sir HENRY CLARENDON.

VOL. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE HISTORY OF Sir HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Miſs ACTON.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

My dear MARIA,

LAST week I arrived at Mr. Weldon's, and was received by all the family with great affection and politeneſs. I have ſuffered much on my dear father's account: his illneſs was tedious; but I hope I cannot reproach myſelf for having neglected any thing that could give him comfort. He made his will about a fortnight before he died: his eſtate undoubtedly deſcends to Charles; but my fortune is far beyond my expectation, as I had too much reaſon to fear that I ſhould have been entirely dependent on my brother; and you know his propenſity is ſo extravagant, that though

he loves me, I believe very ſincerely, I am ſure I ſhould not have been provided for ſo amply. My fortune is 15000l. and Mr. Weldon is appointed my guardian. Charles has, I find, run greatly in debt, as he knew he ſhould, ſooner or later, be poſſeſſed of a conſiderable fortune. I much fear he now intends to give a looſe to pleaſure; and his eſtate, though a very good one, cannot afford him ſufficient means to indulge his profuſe diſpoſition.

Mrs. Weldon is a very amiable woman, polite and affable to all, and univerſally beloved: ſhe treats me with the ſame affection as if I were her daughter.

Miſs Weldon is handſome, good-natured, and thoughtleſs; not a little vain of her charms, though, when ſhe gives herſelf time for reflection, ſhe judges ſenſibly, and candidly. She is going to be married to Sir William Rayner, and the day is ſoon to be fixed; ſo ſoon, that I fear Miſs Weldon has hardly time to conſult her heart: but a ſplendid fortune and a title are, to our ſex, ſuch captivating allurements, that they frequently prove irreſiſtible. Sir William is a ſenſible man; has indulged himſelf in every faſhionable amuſement, though with a great

a great ſhare of prudence, as he ever lived within the limits of his fortune. I ſincerely wiſh Miſs Weldon happy; and may her brilliant vivacity and accompliſhments pleaſe as much when ſhe becomes a wife, as they have hitherto done in her maiden ſtate. Miſs Sophia, her ſiſter, is tall, and exceedingly genteel; her features and complexion very delicate: but as ſhe has not that vivacity which ſo diſtinguiſhes Miſs Charlotte, her converſation in company is ſeldom ſo much attended to: there is, certainly, a dejection in her countenance, which I cannot account for, as ſhe is treated by all the family with the ſame tenderneſs as her ſiſter. In any party of pleaſure, ſhe generally excuſes herſelf; or, if obliged to attend, ſhe appears abſent to the converſation. Should I become her confidante, I will endeavour to diſſipate this unaccountable ſerioufneſs, ſo unbecoming her age and ſituation in life. Mrs. Weldon keeps a great deal of company; it is therefore amazing, that Miſs Sophia ſhould contract ſo grave a diſpoſition, ſince ſhe has always been indulged in every reaſonable wiſh of her heart.

And now, my dear Maria, let me aſk you how your affairs go on? Has Mr. Maynard

perſuaded you to name the day? Why will you ſo long protract his happineſs? You are left to yourſelf; youth, beauty, and wealth in your poſſeſſion: every obſtacle is now removed. I know that you intend to marry Mr. Maynard; and ſurely your mind is above all thoſe coquettiſh arts, which are ſometimes ſo unbecomingly practiſed by our ſex. There is not a more reſpectable character in life than a good clergyman; I know you are ſenſible of this, and prefer Mr. Maynard, in your heart, to all the men in the world. Trifle not, therefore, with your own happineſs; your lot ſeems fallen in a fair ground, and, if it be not your own fault, promiſes an abundant harveſt of felicity. Adieu, dear Maria! Let your next letter be ſigned differently from your laſt, and believe me to be your affectionate friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Dear MARIA, Albemarle-ſtreet.

YESTERDAY Miſs Weldon was married: ſhe looked very handſome; her dreſs was truly elegant, and ſhe behaved exceed-

exceedingly well. The new married pair are ſoon going into Buckinghamſhire, where Sir William has a very fine eſtate. May they enjoy permanent felicity; and may Lady Rayner be as happy as ſhe deſerves! They have a noble houſe near Cavendiſh-ſquare.

I have not ſeen Charles lately, and I am always fearful of his entangling himſelf in ſome quarrel, for I believe he imagines that his ſword can carve his way, and ſettle any differences. What a pity it is that a young man, ſo agreeable in his perſon and addreſs, ſhould give himſelf up to ſuch vicious inclinations! There is the leſs excuſe for him, as he poſſeſſes a great ſhare of ſenſe, and might have made a ſhining figure in the world. But how are all his good qualities forgotten, when we conſider the preſent manner in which he ſpends his life! My heart bleeds for him whenever I hear of his extravagance—and too often for my peace do I hear of his exploits;—it ſhocks me with unſpeakable apprehenſions! Good Heaven! that an only brother ſhould behave thus! I have written to him, remonſtrated with him, all to no purpoſe; he anſwers me with raillery, or calls me a

very pretty preacher. O! how would it pain my honoured mother, could ſhe know that the darling of her once fond heart delighted in the character of a libertine! and yet I would fain palliate his errors, and excuſe his conduct. In infancy he was humoured to exceſs, and knew no contradiction; for, indeed, my father's temper was then far more generous. Charles, therefore, as he advanced in years, was ſtill indulged in whatever pleaſed his little fancy: and at the time of his leaving college, inſtead of travelling with a proper inſtructor, to open his mind, and uſe him to make his own obſervations, he has been for years together left to himſelf, with an income very inadequate to the fortune he now poſſeſſes. He has, accordingly, fallen into bad company, and adopted the principles of his gay companions. Before the death of our father, he was obliged to be more circumſpect in his conduct, as he well knew that it was in my father's power to diſinherit him. I find he has run greatly in debt, which accounts for the manner in which he uſed to live. As my father was ſo long confined by illneſs in the country, he could not be an eye-witneſs of his extravagance; and Charles,

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ever fertile in invention, has always found plauſible excuſes for his conduct. He ſeems now to have thrown aſide every reſtraint; and tacitly confeſſes, that, whether cenſured or reproved, he will live on in his own way. Would he make a right uſe of his acquirements and fortune, he might not only be happy in himſelf, but uſeful and pleaſing to others. The following note I have this minute received from him:

Dear SISTER,

IT will not be in my power to dine with you to-morrow, as ſome gentlemen have engaged me to accompany them into Eſſex. I ſhall ſtay three or four days. Adieu. I remain your affectionate brother,

CHARLES MELVILLE.

What can he do in Eſſex at this ungenial ſeaſon of the year! Lady Rayner is gone into Buckinghamſhire; we all miſs her exceedingly: ſhe has ſuch a flow of ſpirits, joined with a great deal of good-nature, that it renders her very engaging; and would ſhe leave in the country that vanity of which ſhe has no need, her vivacity would univerſally pleaſe. I muſt now retire to dreſs. Company is expected this even-

ing; Mr. and Mrs. Lalum, Mr. and Mrs. Odley, Miſs Maſham, Mr. Sidney, Mr. Hunter, Sir Philip Clendon, and Miſs Spenlove: to all theſe I have been introduced. Mr. and Mrs. Lalum are very agreeable, and Miſs Spenlove bears a moſt amiable character. Miſs Maſham is rather conceited, and haughty in her manner, and gives herſelf all the airs that affectation can produce: ſhe has no real pretenſions to beauty, but enjoys an immenſe fortune, which was left entirely at her own diſpoſal; her parents are dead, and ſhe has very few relations. Sir Philip Clendon is volatile, and all he does he imagines muſt pleaſe; yet ſometimes there is a ſingular gloom on his countenance, which he endeavours in vain to hide.

Your letter is juſt this minute come to hand; ſincerely do I give you joy on the change of your condition. May you, my dear Maria, enjoy that felicity, which virtue only can beſtow! May every earthly bleſſing attend you here, as far as is conſiſtent with your happineſs hereafter! Tell Mr. Maynard, from me, that I know every hour of your life will be a freſh witneſs to aſſure him, that he has choſen for his wife

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one of the moſt amiable ladies in England. Adieu, my dear friend; believe me to be, with the greateſt ſincerity, yours affectionately,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

From Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

Parſonage-houſe.

THANK you, my dear Harriett, for your laſt letters, and for your congratulations on my late folly: indeed, the knot is tied, never to be looſed. What a compliment you pay me! I wiſh you have not already learnt the flattery of London. I ſhewed that part of your letter to Mr. Maynard, begged him not to be too proud, but to ſee what a wiſe choice he had made: he ſmiled, and looked pleaſed; declared, he was very happy to find the opinion of ſo judicious a lady coincided with his own. We leave Oxford next week, and go into Devonſhire, where Mr. Maynard has a very good living. Do, my dear Harriett, continue to write whenever you can: ſurely you are very reſerved, or you would have informed me of all the conqueſts you have made. What! do none of the London

gentlemen diſcover the charms of your perſon and mind? They muſt be ſtupid, if they ſee not the former with the admiration it deſerves; and I am ſure the latter ſhines in full perfection, whenever they converſe with you. But I am perſuaded it is not their ſtupidity; it is your modeſty prevents me the pleaſure of hearing the fine things which are ſaid to you. Beware, Harriett, of reſerve; I inſiſt upon your writing with the ſame undiſſembled ſincerity as formerly. I was accidentally in company the other day with a gentleman, who had ſeen you at Mr. Weldon's: he told me, that you had many admirers; particularly, that a Mr. Darnton has made propoſals of marriage to you, but that you politely declined his addreſſes; and that he is ſo charmed with you, he is determined not to relinquiſh his ſuit, hoping you will change your mind. Is all this true? If it be, do you think I will excuſe your ſilence upon the ſubject? No, Harriett; entertaining as are your deſcriptions of other perſons, your own affairs are far more pleaſing to me. Beſides, when we go to our retirement, I ſhall want ſomething to enliven me; and there is nothing can ſo much contribute to

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my ſatisfaction, as to hear of your welfare. A ſigh will eſcape me now and then, when I reflect where I am going: it is not a ſigh of ſorrow, but a ſort of reluctance, at leaving a place I have been ſo accuſtomed to; but you know I am now married, and I muſt obey. I always loved a country life, and Mr. Maynard paints ſuch alluring romantic ſcenes in his deſcription of our little retreat, that I almoſt long to be there. I tell him, it will be very mortifying if he has exaggerated the ſubject, for I poſitively will not ſtay there, if the houſe be not anſwerable to what he ſays: this I only tell him, to make myſelf of conſequence; for well I know, when he commands, I muſt ſubmit. He wiſely bids me make allowances for the time of year, and not expect the country to look ſo delightful in January as in May. I ſmiled when he ſaid this, and complacently aſſured him, that his preſence would render it, in my imagination, a perpetual ſpring. We are very buſy at preſent. I wiſh we were well ſettled; when we are, you ſhall, perhaps, receive a more connected letter than this; but you know I have not been uſed to hurry and buſtle. Your next may be directed hither, as I

hope you will write very ſoon. Mr. Maynard has juſt broken in upon me, and gueſſing to whom I was writing, begged me to join his love with mine, which I ſincerely do, and remain, dear Harriett, yours, &c.

MARIA MAYNARD.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

My dear FRIEND,

AS you give me the kind aſſurance that my letters are welcome to you, I readily purſue my inclination of writing. You know I always loved ſcribbling, and I the rather addreſs myſelf to ſo indulgent a friend, as, though I am very happy to be corrected by her in my errors, I need not fear the ſeverity of a critic. Indeed, my dear Mrs. Maynard, you rally me too much on the ſubject of conqueſts. In a place like London, there are ſo many amiable beautiful ladies, that your Harriett, I believe, ſtands but a poor chance, where ſhe is ſo much eclipſed. Sometimes I am honoured with the appellation of "the pretty ruſtick" by Lady Rayner, who laughs at my innocent ſimplicity, as ſhe calls it, on many occa-

occaſions: her ladyſhip is not yet returned from Buckinghamſhire; when ſhe comes, I imagine ſhe will be engaged in paying and receiving viſits for ſome time. There is, indeed, a certain gentleman, who, it ſeems, has penetration enough to diſcover ſomething in my perſon to make him pay his addreſſes to me; his name is *Darnton:* but I cannot like him ſo well as to encourage his ſuit. He has a fine ſpecious manner; his perſon not diſagreeable—he thinks it handſome;—he has a good fortune, and that is all I can ſay of him: but, as I never wiſh to give encouragement to any man, merely for ſport, and as I do not mean to anſwer his addreſſes with equal ſerioufneſs, I have begged Mr. Weldon to entreat him to deſiſt from his ſolicitations. I have not yet heard how he takes my denial; his temper, as I judge by many incidents, is impatient of controul; I never deſire to ſee him again. Charles is not yet returned; what can he be doing at this ſeaſon of the year in Eſſex? Sophia is not more chearful ſince the abſence of her ſiſter: I wronged the dear girl, in ſuſpecting ſhe was the leaſt addicted to jealouſy; her temper is beyond expreſſion ſweet, and I will dive into the reaſon of her penſiveneſs: no oppor-

opportunity has yet offered for my urging her to explain the cauſe that obviouſly ruffles the ſerenity of her temper. I am now going to call upon Miſs Spenlove, as I promiſed to paſs an hour with her this morning.

As I did not cloſe my letter, I will give you the converſation that paſſed betwixt Sophia and myſelf, and you will ſee the cauſe of her ſerioufneſs. On my return yeſterday from Miſs Spenlove's, I went up to dreſs for dinner. Sophia is my bed-fellow, and we have a light cloſet adjoining to the room, which cloſet has a glaſs door. On coming into the chamber, I ſaw Sophia ſitting there, with her back to the door, ſo that I could very eaſily view her motions quite unobſerved. She held a paper in one hand, and in the other her handkerchief which ſhe often applied to her eyes. Although I am an enemy to liſtening, or prying into other perſons affairs, yet I thought myſelf juſtified in this, as I hoped it might unravel the cauſe of Sophia's penſive diſpoſition. I approached ſoftly; ſhe again read the letter in her hand very attentively; then burſt into tears, and I heard her exclaim,

claim, "What a wicked creature is he!" She then got up, and locked the letter in her cabinet. I directly imagined ſome love affair had diſturbed her peace, but yet I could not then gueſs who had made ſo deep an impreſſion on her heart, as ſhould cauſe her to ſhew ſo much perturbation.

When I reflected on her exclamation, I was puzzled indeed. I knew the innate purity of Sophia's mind would ſhudder at the leaſt idea of an unworthy action; but I was reſolved to enter the cloſet, and aſk her the reaſon of her emotions; I therefore accoſted her in the following manner: "My dear Sophia, I have juſt now obſerved your emotions with concern; not, I aſſure you, through a premeditated intention, but merely by chance, on my coming into the room to dreſs for dinner. I beheld you ſitting on that chair, and I ſaw a letter in your hand which ſeemed to diſcompoſe you very much. What (added I) has your enamoured ſwain written you a farewell letter, filled with reproaches of inſenſibility to his vows; or has he proved unfaithful to his lovely miſtreſs?" She feigned a ſmile at theſe my queſtions; wondered what I meant, and ſaid ſhe had only been reading ſomething rather ſerious.

"Come,

"Come, Sophia, do not act with duplicity; make your friend acquainted, why it is that ſuch a penſiveneſs overſpreads features, which nature formed for chearfulneſs and ſmiles? I will keep your ſecret; you ſhall not repent of the confidence placed in me." In ſhort, I preſſed her ſo cloſe, that ſhe at length, half reluctantly, told me the cauſe of her uneaſineſs. I had particularly aſked her the reaſon of her exclamation before I entered the cloſet: ſhe bluſhed, ſhe heſitated, and looked confounded, but recovering herſelf a little, "Indeed, ſaid ſhe, Harriett, I cannot keep any thing from you, and therefore I will be ingenuous with you. I was revolving in my mind the cauſe of my uneaſineſs, combating with my reaſon, and arguing with my heart on my weakneſs, when I could not help pitying the condition of the brother of my Harriet, whoſe conduct gives her ſo much uneaſineſs: he, that indulges himſelf in all the follies of the age, what ſhall he do, when overtaken by ſickneſs, or baffled by misfortune?" And then the dear girl, hiding her face with her handkerchief, added, "His perſon, it is true, is amiable, but I was then in trouble for his future happineſs,

and

and I could not help exclaiming, what a wicked creature is he? O Harriett! the thought of this has greatly added to my ſeriouſneſs, for I now own to you, that had his diſpoſition reſembled yours, I ſhould not have taken ſo much pains to ſtifle a once-growing attachment. But now it is over: I have conquered myſelf, and doubt not I ſhall ſoon reſume my wonted chearfulneſs, by the aſſiſtance of your friendly advice." I cannot ſay, my dear Maria, that I was greatly ſurpriſed at this diſcovery, as, from ſeveral little incidents in Sophia's behaviour, I had entertained ſome ſuſpicions of her partiality for my brother. I hope, indeed, ſhe has conquered herſelf; for, to ſpeak ſincerely, her mind is far ſuperior to the ſubject of its preſent emotions, and her ſentiments ſo pure, that ſuch different tempers, I am fearful, could never be happy together. I applauded her candour, and added all the lenitives in my power. As to Charles, ſaid I, he gives me great uneaſineſs: he is young, I grant, and may reform; but I cannot think him worthy of my Sophia; and happy as I might have been in the thought of our being related, yet as the caſe now is, I muſt

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commend the laudable reſolution you have taken, to ſtop every avenue of your heart againſt an encroaching paſſion, which, perhaps, would but render you unhappy. My brother has ſenſe, and needs only the reſolution to exert it: may he ſoon ſee the errors of his conduct! But come, added I, it is time to dreſs; let us wave this ſubject for the preſent. So I began to prepare for the important buſineſs, which ſo much engroſſes the time of, I believe I might ſay, half the world. Adieu! Here I muſt cloſe my letter, and can only add, yours ever affectionately,

H. MELVILLE.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

Parſonage-houſe.

My dear HARRIETT,

YOU ſurpriſe me very much at the diſcovery you have made in the heart of Miſs Sophia. Could Charles be rightly made ſenſible of the worth of his conqueſt, what an advantage it would be to him! but I am afraid he is too much a devotee at the ſhrine of diſſipation, to have any ſerious ideas of matrimony: yet who knows what

what may happen! Many young men have been ſtopped in their wild career by ſome unavoidable accident; nay, and ſometimes they are led on to virtue by the example of their miſtreſſes, if they be but happy enough to place their affections on worthy objects. I am now, I think, quite ſettled in my new reſidence. The ſituation and the country round us, even at this ſeaſon of the year, are not without charms, and when ſpring advances the proſpects muſt baffle all deſcription. Our houſe is very neat and comfortable; the back part looks into a large convenient garden; the front commands an extenſive view, and I promiſe myſelf much pleaſure in my rural habitation. Some perſons may ſay, What pleaſure can be expected in the country,—at a parſonage-houſe,—in the month of February,—when nature hardly begins to be animated,—with only a few neighbours to viſit; whilſt there are ſo many diverſions in London to partake of, that enliven the ſpirits and beguile the time? Perſons who talk thus cannot be convinced of the pleaſures of a country life: let them, therefore, live on in a continual round of diſſipation; but may I never loſe my reliſh for the ſuperior enjoy-

enjoyments of rural delight. I have been ever accuſtomed to live in the country, and find there ſo many rational amuſements, that I ſhould be very ſorry to exchange my abode. I know your opinion coincides with mine, and I am certain you will not be concerned when the time arrives, that ſhall conſtrain you to leave Albemarle-ſtreet for the genial air and delightfully variegated ſcenes of Richmond. I ſnall not give you any farther deſcription of my new ſituation, as I hope my dear Harriett will grace our humble cot ere it be long; that is, when the country has put on the gay attire of ſpring,—for I would have you ſee our Arcadia to the beſt advantage. The weather has favoured us, and we ride or walk out almoſt every day. I will juſt give you a little idea of the manner in which we ſpend the day: The mornings being dark, I riſe at eight, and after the firſt neceſſary family duties,—the tribute of gratitude to goodneſs ever new,—we breakfaſt in a little parlour that looks into the garden, and in which the morning ſun ſhines, as if pleaſed with his reception. After breakfaſt I inſpect the domeſtick affairs, while Mr. Maynard retires to his ſtudy for an hour or two.

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If the weather be fine, at twelve o'clock we take a ride on horſeback, or walk about our grounds, or perhaps order the poſt-chaiſe, and make a morning viſit to ſome of our more diſtant neighbours. About two we return and dreſs for dinner, which is ſerved up exactly at three: frequently we receive company or viſit in the afternoon; but if we are alone, after dinner my lord and maſter generally ſpends an hour in his ſtudy: at ſix we drink tea, and the vacant time betwixt that and ſupper I employ at my needle, or netting and ſuch-like, whilſt Mr. Maynard reads aloud ſome inſtructing or entertaining book: then, in my turn, I amuſe him with a tune on the harpſichord, for he is very fond of muſick, and he is kindly pleaſed to compliment my genius and acquirements in this delightful ſcience. We ſup at nine, chat for an hour, end the day with our domeſticks about us in the ſame duty we began it with, take up the candles, and retire to reſt. We ſpend our time in this uniform manner, when quite alone, which is ſometimes the caſe. There are ſo many families around us, that we have as much ſociety as is deſirable. Thoſe who do not reſide

ſide in the country cannot gueſs how much of chearful hoſpitality reigns there: and, indeed, our only fear is the having more of it than convenient. We have neighbours very near us; moſt of them keep carriages, and if one may form any judgement thus early, I think they appear very agreeable. Pray, Harriett, how does Mr. Darnton like your refuſal of him? I fancy not much;—and who elſe has fallen a victim to your charms? Tell me not of the ſuperior beauty and accompliſhments of the London ladies: you may vie with the beſt of them in natural or acquired talents; and I am ſure the genuine bloom in your cheeks muſt triumph over the moſt ſtudied complexion; for it is in vain to deceive the eye with the ſmear of paint, inſtead of the mantling bluſhes of health. But you will be angry if I tell you of the advantages you poſſeſs in perſon and mind: therefore, my pen, obey thy director, and aſſure my dear Harriett, that I am

Her affectionate friend,

MARIA MAYNARD.

Miſs MELVILLE, in anſwer.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

I REJOICE, my dear Mrs. Maynard, that your new habitation proves ſo agreeable. May you there cultivate that true enjoyment, which can alone ſpring from virtue! May every choiceſt bleſſing attend the friend of my infancy, the companion of my youth! and, as we are ſo far ſeparated, let a mutual correſpondence conſole us for the ſeparation. I will write the moſt minute occurrences of my life: I will freely inform you of every thing that happens, to excite you on your part to indulge me with the ſame unreſervedneſs.

Sir William and Lady Rayner are returned from Buckinghamſhire; ſhe has almoſt paid and received her bridal viſits. As I have been a great deal with her, it will account for my very long ſilence. I am charmed with your manner of life, and ſhall be very happy to be an eye-witneſs of your felicity the approaching ſummer. I have made Mr. Darnton very angry by my refuſal of his addreſſes: he vows I ſhall be his. Mr. Weldon told him my mind: he begged an interview with me; nay, he would not be denied: ſo this afternoon

ternoon I am to be perſecuted with his viſit. I at firſt peremptorily refuſed, but my friends adviſed me to grant his requeſt. Miſs Spenlove has juſt been here to invite us to a private dance next week: ſhe is indeed an excellent young lady,—a pattern for moſt of her companions. Sophia is more chearful than ſhe was, but ſtill enjoys not that ſerenity of temper natural to her. I ſhewed her that part of your letter which deſcribes your country retreat; ſhe is quite delighted with it, and always, when you are ſpoken of, ſays you are an amiable lady.

You may remember, in a former letter, I mentioned, that on my firſt ſeeing her in the cloſet, ſhe had a note in her hand, which ſhe was reading very attentively. I have diſcovered that this was the ſame note I had received from Charles, to inform me that he was going into Eſſex. I ſuppoſe I had left it about the room, and Sophia had taken it to contemplate the hand-writing of the young ſpark;—and perhaps, from general fame, her imagination ſuggeſted to her, that he might not be going into the country for the beſt of purpoſes. If, as you obſerve, Charles knew the worth of

his

his conqueſt, he would be very happy; for ſurely ſo much gentleneſs, modeſty, virtue, and ſincerity are blended in the mind of Sophia, that ſhe cannot fail rendering any man of underſtanding happy: but this muſt be left for time to determine; at preſent I avoid any particular converſation with her on the ſubject. Mrs. Weldon rejoices to ſee the alteration in Sophia's countenance. But it is almoſt dinner-time, and then this perſecuting man muſt be encountered with,—for he is to dine here. Somebody knocks. It is he, indeed! I can ſee him alight from his chariot; dreſſed in ſuch gay attire, as if he imagined, becauſe I do not like him, I ſhall fall in love with his magnificent apparel. I am ſummoned to prepare for dinner, and therefore ſhall finiſh my letter in the evening.

Thurſday night, ten o'clock.

Juſt before tea Mrs. Weldon and Sophia contrived to leave the room, and the gentleman confidently taking me by the hand, ſaid, he now waited for a favourable anſwer to his addreſſes; and added, "Let that lovely mouth pronounce me the happieſt of men." "Sir, ſaid I, withdrawing my hand, I am ſurprized at your declaration.

claration. Mr. Weldon has told you my mind on this ſubject, and has, I am perſuaded, informed you of my reſolution: but, leſt you ſhould not think that ſufficient, give me leave again to aſſure you, I am much obliged to you for the favourable opinion you entertain of me; but as I do not wiſh to keep any one in ſuſpenſe, I now poſitively declare I never can be your wife. I muſt entreat you to be ſatisfied with this determination, and pay your addreſſes to ſome worthier lady, who will know how to return your eſteem with equal ſincerity." He ſeemed nettled at my reply, and I was about to withdraw; but he oppoſed me with great vehemence, ſaying, "Madam, you are very cruel, to make wounds, and then refuſe to heal them. Thoſe eyes that look ſo innocent, what miſchief do they cauſe! But will nothing tempt you to recall the words you have juſt uttered?" He then added, in a more haughty tone, "Surely, madam, my ſituation in life, my fortune, my expectations are ſuch, that"—— I interrupted him—"I do not chooſe, ſir, to continue the ſubject; but you have a very indifferent

ferent opinion of me, if you fancy that wealth or grandeur can prevail, when a reciprocal affection is really wanting: Sincerity I think is neceſſary in a caſe of this nature; and therefore I declare, that if ever I marry, my heart ſhall be always given with my hand." "What! madam, replied he, you do not like my perſon!"—looking at the ſame time in a large glaſs, which was placed very conveniently for him at the lower end of the room,—thus inſinuating that he never was told ſo before. "Sir, ſaid I, pray let me withdraw: The reaſon of my admitting this particular interview was not to argue on the ſubject, but to give you my final determination."—I got as far as the door, but he put his back againſt it, declaring I ſhould not ſtir till I had informed him who was the happy man that had poſſeſſion of my heart. "Sir, ſaid I, this treatment is not what I expected from you; and as I am not obliged to anſwer this or any other queſtion, I entreat you to let me retire. I cannot help obſerving, that your behaviour is very unbecoming a gentleman; and therefore be aſſured, I ſhall not give any account to *you*, on the ſubject of

ſo ſingular a requiſition!" He then begged I would not be angry, and continued to talk in the complimental ſtrain; vowed I was handſome as an angel; that he could think of no other woman, and added, I ſhould be his, by ſome means or other. I know not how long I might have endured this impertinence, had I not been relieved by a ſervant's bringing me a note from Lady Rayner, which though of very trifling importance, I had preſence of mind to tell the gentleman that it required an immediate anſwer. He then took his leave, with an abundance of fine ſpeeches,—though I could eaſily ſee he was not pleaſed with the reſult of his viſit. Some company coming in to tea, I had no particular converſation with my good friends till after ſupper; and then related to them as above. Mr. Weldon ſaid, "Ah Harriett! I fear you have not yet got rid of Mr. Darnton: he is very uncontroulable, and ſeldom fails of executing a determined intention: faith! I muſt look ſharp, and take care that he does not ſteal by force my charming ward." "Dear ſir, anſwered I, you do not mean to frighten me! he ſurely cannot be ſo baſe!

I diſ-

I diſlike him enough now, and could he entertain ſuch a thought, I am ſure I ſhould abſolutely hate him:"—but, indeed, as I never go abroad without my kind, my ſecond mother, I need not fear. I will not take up your time farther on ſo unworthy a theme. The converſation changed, and Mr. Weldon rallied Sophia on the topic of marriage;—for you muſt know ſhe refuſed ſome time ago a very good offer. He told her ſhe muſt not be ſo difficult, and drank her health: "Here, ſaid he, is to the object of your affections, wherever he be,"—filling her glaſs at the ſame time,--and he hoped ſhe would not refuſe the toaſt: ſhe looked rather ſilly, drank the wine, and bluſhed exceedingly. All this did not eſcape the penetrating eye of Mrs. Weldon; but I turned the diſcourſe by telling her Jenny had given me warning, and I believed ſhe was going to be married: indeed I am ſorry to part with her, yet I hope it is for her good: I muſt have the diſagreeable taſk of enquiring for another.

Pray write, my dear Mrs. Maynard, very ſoon: for, need I tell you how agreeable is the letter of an abſent friend? I

often think what pleaſure the world receives, or may receive, by writing. To reflect that any one can communicate thoughts, and ſpeak ſilently to the eyes, though at ever ſo great a diſtance; and that, notwithſtanding ſea and land divide the abſent friend, or parent, or child, yet ſtill they may pour out the ſoul upon paper, and be informed of each others welfare; this, however trite and familiar, is ſurely a very ſtriking idea! The art of printing is ſtill more uſeful: by it, we converſe with the beſt authors; we are made acquainted with the lives, manners, and ſentiments of the moſt diſtinguiſhed perſons of the ages in which they lived: we are informed of the moſt remarkable incidents that have happened, perhaps long before we received our being; and all comprized in the ſmall ſpace of a volume, or a few pages. Reading is ſo entertaining, that it is impoſſible to be alone: the mind is thereby opened, the ideas enlarged, and whilſt we read well-choſen books, we are improved as well as entertained. For my own part, I cannot help thinking, that thoſe who neither love reading or writing muſt be either deficient in natural capacity,

or elſe their education has been too narrow to enable them to derive any pleaſure from a book, or a pen. Our ſex, indeed, have other neceſſary occupations, which ought not to be neglected; and books to us, generally ſpeaking, ſhould be but as a kind of ſecondary employment: yet are they a delightful amuſement to fill up our vacant hours, though not to engroſs our principal attention; for if a woman gives up her time to them ſo much, as to neglect her family, her perſon, or her friends, ſhe may become ſagacious indeed, and learned, but muſt expect to be laughed at by her own ſex, and deſervedly deſpiſed by the other. I do not pretend to be a judge of what ought to employ the gentlemen; but this I may venture to affirm, that when they have little or no reliſh for literary acquirements, they are ſeldom found capable of engaging on the moſt common topics of converſation. They expoſe their ignorance whenever they ſpeak; and this ſtupidity is to the full as unbearable as downright pedantry. Nay, for themſelves, it is worſe; for though the pedant be diſagreeable in company, he can at leaſt amuſe himſelf, which is more than half the ignorant loungers can pretend to

do. Will not you think me very preſumptuous to give my ſentiments ſo freely? But, conſider, you commanded me to write without reſerve. The length of this letter will tacitly confeſs, what pleaſure I take in writing to my dear friend. My paper informs me it is time to conclude. Adieu. I remain yours affectionately,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

Parſonage-houſe.

My dear HARRIETT,

I AM ſorry your brother's conduct is ſtill the ſame. May he ſoon be tired of his preſent courſe of life! But, although this be my ſincere wiſh, we can hardly expect the accompliſhment of it. A young man ſeldom ſtops on a ſudden, in the full career of diſſipated folly; and were this the caſe, we ſhould ſtill fear, leſt his volatile temper might again purſue the road to fancied pleaſure. But there is a Power above, able, by methods unknown to us, to lead him gently in the virtuous path, and make him as much deſpiſe his preſent manner of life, as he has delighted in it; and to that

Power

Power we muſt leave him. I do not wonder that Mr. Darnton is angry at your refuſal. He muſt be greatly mortified at the cold reception you gave him; but, believe me, I ſecretly rejoice at it, for I cannot think him worthy of your eſteem.

But pray, Harriett, who is the happy man? Although you would not confeſs this ſecret to an intruder, ſurely you cannot refuſe Me. It wasrather impertinent for a diſcarded lover to aſk the queſtion; but, *entre nous*, betwixt female friends it is very common. I therefore again repeat, who is the happy man? But I anticipate your anſwer: you will ſay, "Dear Mrs. Maynard! How can you talk thus? I have not yet thought about it, and my heart is abſolutely diſengaged." And do you think, Harriett, that I believe you? Indeed I do not. I know there is a certain gentleman frequents Albemarle-ſtreet, whoſe mind, and fortune, and perſon, and accompliſhments, are all adequate to your own. I will teaze you a little, though you are ever ſo angry. I am glad Miſs Sophia is more chearful: pray tell her how proud it makes me to have her good opinion; and aſſure her, it will give me the greateſt pleaſure to ſee her in

this part of the country. The ſpring now advances ſwiftly, and begins to ſtrew its footſteps with infant flowers: all nature ſoon will ſmile, and rejoice to put on its verdant attire, embroidered with elegance and beauty. I cannot here reſiſt the temptation to exclaim, with our favourite Thomſon,

Who can paint
Like Nature? Can Imagination boaſt,
Amid its gay creation, hues like her's?
Or can it mix them with that matchleſs ſkill,
And loſe them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?———
Infinite numbers, delicacies, ſmells,
With hues on hues expreſſion cannot paint;
The breath of Nature, and her endleſs bloom!

I propoſe to myſelf great ſatisfaction in the garden next month; for what can be a more charming employment, than to watch the growth of tender plants, and to ſee and ſmell the bloſſoms as they ſhoot, bidding us only wait with patience, and they will crown our labours with an abundant plenty? How grateful to the ſenſes is their perfume! All the productions of art are unable to vie with this agreeable odour. I have fitted up a room that looks into the garden; honeyſuckles and jeſſamines ſhall twine about the win-

windows; and who do you think is the fair Amanda for whom it is intended? Leſt you ſhould not gueſs right, it is deſigned for—Miſs Harriett Melville! Do, my dear friend, grace my ruſtick habitation with your preſence; this only is wanting to compleat the happineſs of

MARIA MAYNARD.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

MANY thanks to my dear friend for her agreeable invitation! I ſhall be happy to wait on you very ſoon. Next month our family repair to Richmond, and when they ſet out for that place, I propoſe ſpending a month with you; they will not ſpare me longer. Then will I ſcold you for teazing me, as you juſtly ſtile it, in your laſt letter. I ſhall only now ſay, that you have really anticipated the anſwer I ſhould have made to your queſtion,—for my heart is indeed abſolutely diſengaged. I did not imagine you had ſo much deceivableneſs about you. You ſay I am acquainted with a gentleman, whoſe fortune, accompliſh-

ments, &c. are adequate to my own. I directly found you out on reading this ſentence. You intended, by taxing me falſly, to find the truth, for I am ſure you cannot know what paſſes in Albemarle-ſtreet; and how you muſt laugh at my credulity, if you can ſuppoſe me capable of believing that few perſons are equal to myſelf! On the contrary, almoſt all I converſe with are far ſuperior to your Harriett. I do aſſure you I often appear very deficient. What are my accompliſhments, what are my talents, natural or acquired, when compared to many others? No, Maria, I am not vain enough to fancy myſelf above my companions; and tho' I might be ſo proud as to tell you the compliments I receive, I rather think them words of courſe, than that I have merit enough to deſerve them. Laſt night we ſpent the evening,—I ſhould ſay the night, at Mrs. Spenlove's, for we were not at home till four this morning; however, I roſe at my uſual hour, and here I am in my cloſet chatting away to you. Every thing was conducted with elegance and propriety. Sophia was dreſſed in roſe-coloured luteſtring, trimmed with gauze, and looked extremely well. Mrs. Weldon always

always dreſſes with propriety and elegance; and your Harriett wore black ſilk. I greatly feared Mr. Darnton would be there, but was agreeably diſappointed. I danced with a very polite gentleman, the ſon of Sir James Clarendon, a rich old baronet. Sophia's partner was Mr. Sidney, who, I believe, is an admirer of this perverſe fair one,—for ſuch I muſt call her,—ſince ſhe aſſures me nothing ſhall alter the reſolution ſhe has taken not to marry.

I will not enumerate the perſons in laſt night's aſſembly; but they were all well behaved, well dreſſed, and pleaſed with each other. My brother was invited, but excuſed himſelf. I'll finiſh my letter after breakfaſt.

12 o'clock.

Mr. Sidney has juſt now been to enquire after his fair partner. I think it would not hurt Mr. Clarendon if he were to do the ſame; but I do not care: the next time I dance with him, he ſhall. You ſee how fretful I am grown. O how I long for the time to come, when I ſhall be an eye-witneſs of your felicity! I am quite charmed with the deſcription of the room allotted for me. Somebody knocks loudly at the door; a chariot

chariot ſtops,—and who is it but Mr. Clarendon! Well! now he ſhall dance with me again.—I am ſummoned down ſtairs.

On my entering the parlour, Mr. Clarendon approached me very reſpectfully, and hoped I had received no cold from laſt night's dancing: I thanked him, I had not; and after the uſual topics of converſation, many compliments paſſed betwixt him and Mrs. Weldon. Indeed his behaviour is polite, without affectation; his deportment engaging and manly; and his whole perſon at once beſpeaks the gentleman and the man of faſhion. He ſtaid about half an hour, and then took his leave, ſaying, he ſhould be very proud to cultivate a friendſhip with the family. I am now going to Lady Rayner, having promiſed to attend her on a morning's ramble.

2 o'clock.

The purport of my viſit was very different from what I intend ed. On my entering the houſe, the ſervant informed me Lady Rayner was not at home. "Bleſs me! ſays I, this is very extraordinary indeed! it was her ladyſhip's own appointment." I was proceeding, when Lady Rayner, hearing my voice,

voice, ſent her woman to intreat me to walk up. She received me in her uſual manner: "My dear Harriett, ſaid ſhe, excuſe the apparent rudeneſs of my preſent behaviour; but I gave orders to be denied to company; and, in the perturbation of my mind, forgot to except you. I have been ſtrangely uſed. Theſe men! Theſe men! O keep ſingle, if you wiſh to be happy."—What is the meaning of all this? Dear Lady Rayner, explain the myſtery.—Come, ſit down, ſaid ſhe, and ſo I will. This morning, at breakfaſt, an altercation enſued betwixt me and my lord and maſter. Next week you know there is to be a maſquerade: I have a great curioſity to ſee one; and I told Sir William my intention of going. He at firſt perſuaded me not; but on my inſiſting to purſue my inclination, he abſolutely told me I ſhould not go. This greatly provoked me; for of what uſe are beauty, youth, and wealth, if you do not enjoy them by partaking of every faſhionable amuſement? It is ſo gothic, never to have ſeen a maſquerade! Sir William, I am ſure, goes to them himſelf; nay, he hinted as if he ſhould go next week; and I told him, I ſuppoſed he wanted to keep me at home,

home, that he might have no reſtraint on his liberty. This made him very angry; he declared, no woman whom he regarded ſhould be ſeen at a maſquerade; and then, in a milder tone, hoped I would oblige him in this reaſonable requeſt. Reaſonable requeſt, indeed! So, Sir William, you fancy I am to be limited in my pleaſures; no, Sir, if You do not eſcorte me to theſe places, other perſons will. Madam, ſaid he, riſing haſtily, do not provoke me, I know what you would inſinuate. Let others attend you, if you pleaſe; but take care of your reputation. Do not give me cauſe to ſuſpect you! This quite incenſed me, but I moderated my reſentment, and coolly anſwered, Whilſt I know the rectitude of my own heart, I am very indifferent to the world's opinion. If you will not let me have my way in theſe trifles, it muſt cauſe great altercation. And is it come to this, madam? anſwered he; I will bear it no longer. So he took up his hat and cane, and went out; and here I am, as well without him as with him. Now, Harriett, give me impartially your opinion. Do not you think, if I yield this point, I ſhall appear a mere paſſive machine, without any will of my

my own, but actuated only at the command of this lordly creature?

Indeed, ſaid I, Lady Rayner, I am very much ſurprized at what you have told me; but infinitely more ſo, at your perſiſting to go where Sir William would fain convince you it is improper. Nay, do not look aſtoniſhed: hear me out, and then confute me. You ſay he would have perſuaded you, but your provoking anſwers, and, I dare ſay, clouded countenance, hindered him from purſuing that gentler mode. Sir William loves pleaſure, and has partaken, poſſibly, of every amuſement in London; he, therefore, more particularly knows the frequent improprieties of the place that you ſo much wiſh to be ſeen at; and ought you not then to take it as a kindneſs that he would oppoſe your going?—Nay, nay, I will be heard. But, not to argue on the propriety or the impropriety of the caſe,—though an innocent mind may certainly be innocent any where,—yet you ought to have given it up the moment you ſaw it was diſagreeable to Sir William; nor, till you provoked him, do I find he behaved with the leaſt degree of haughtineſs. Have a

care,

care, my dear friend, how you defy the world's cenſure! we may be perfectly innocent, yet behave in ſuch a manner, as to cauſe the malevolent tongue of ſlander to whiſper ſtinging falſities againſt our reputation. There is no doubt but your reputation is pure and unſullied; I mean no pointed reflections; I would only caution you, with the freedom of a friend, not to truſt too much to the rectitude of your intentions; but, by letting your outward behaviour correſpond with the innate purity of your heart, convince all who know you that you are truly amiable. Ah! Harriett! ſhe replied, with half a ſmile,—you have a bewitching manner: you abſolutely convince me of ſomething wrong, whether I will or no: To tell you the truth, as much as I like a maſquerade, I ſhould have abundantly more pleaſure in trying my power over Sir William in this point, than in the actual enjoyment of it; and yet, if I were inclined now to oblige him, I do not know which way to begin. Can I ſay, "Dear Sir William Rayner, I am very ſorry I contradicted you: pray forgive me! I yield to your will; and henceforth be ſo kind to direct me as you pleaſe?" My dear

Lady

Lady Rayner, returned I, there is no need either of mean ſubmiſſion, or a haughty obſtinacy: they are equally unbecoming. Sir William, when he reflects coolly, will, I dare ſay, mention it to you again with that politeneſs which is natural to him. Then may you recede with honour, by ſaying you have conſidered of it, and will chearfully oblige him in this point: and, indeed, who can a wife oblige better than her huſband?—than that man to whom ſhe has vowed obedience? and, if he be a man of ſenſe, mutual complaiſance muſt enſue. As to trying your power, indeed it is very dangerous to attempt: ſuch a conduct may be ſucceſsful once or twice; but ſoon will the wife's power be weakened, or deemed exorbitant, and the once-paſſive huſband will re-aſſume his prerogatives. "All this is very true, ſaid ſhe, and I am rather ſorry this trifling affair has gone ſo far." Here ſhe was proceeding, but hearing that Sir William was juſt come in, and had retired to his own apartment, I ſaw it nettled her. She thought he would ſeek her directly, no doubt. However, in about half an hour he entered her dreſſing-room, but with rather an em-

barraſſ-

barraſſment in his countenance: he gave me the uſual ſalutation of the morning, and turned to his lady, ſaying, I am glad to ſee you in ſuch agreeable company. Why, am I ever in diſagreeable company? rejoined ſhe with an arch look: but I know what you hint at; you think you left me too ſerious to be diverted with theſe trifles,—taking up a new cap. I cannot tell what ailed me this morning, but Harriett has perfectly convinced me of my error, and I yield the point moſt readily. This confeſſion was more than I expected; Sir William took hold of her hand with great tenderneſs; "Indeed, ſaid he, you make me very happy, and have exceedingly obliged me by this condeſcenſion." In ſhort, I left them in perfect good humour with each other, and may it long continue! Lady Rayner has many good qualities, but her temper is rather impatient; yet, when ſhe gives herſelf time for reflection, no one is more ready to atone for her quickneſs. Her greateſt failing is a certain degree of vanity: the deſire of being admired is her predominant paſſion; and I greatly fear Sir William will not perfectly reliſh this part of her temper.

Charles

Charles is ſtill the ſame. I have but too frequent proofs of his diſſipated diſpoſition. Adieu, dear Maria. Yours,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

From the SAME to the SAME.

Friday evening.

LITTLE did I think, when I mentioned my brother the other day, I ſhould have ſo recent an evidence of his libertine principles. I believe I told you that Jenny was going to be married, on which account I hired another, and ſettled with her yeſterday. This morning, as I was at work in the parlour, I heard a female voice, enquiring if the lady was provided with a ſervant? Curioſity led me to the door, and a very pretty, decent young woman offered herſelf to my view, and appeared much chagrined at the ſervant's telling her I was engaged. There was a ſomething in her manner above the vulgar, and I was induced by her genteel behaviour to aſk her ſeveral queſtions. A young lady of my acquaintance wants a maid, and I thought ſhe might ſuit her. I accordingly begged the young woman to walk up ſtairs. When we entered

the

the room, I aſked her the uſual queſtions about her capacity for undertaking the place in view; to all which ſhe anſwered with the greateſt modeſty and diffidence. I deſired to know where ſhe had lived, and for what reaſon ſhe had left her miſtreſs: "Madam, anſwered ſhe, I never yet was in place: I am juſt come from the country, but I have a relation hereabouts, that will recommend me to the notice of any lady I may be happy enough to pleaſe." A bluſh overſpread her face, her voice faltered, and ſhe appeared in the greateſt confuſion. There was an innocent ſimplicity in her addreſs, which induced me to aſk her the reaſon of this confuſion; and I added, "Open your heart to me; I am prejudiced in your favour by the decency of your manner; and be aſſured that I will endeavour to ſerve you as far as lies in my power." This a little emboldened her, and ſhe went on in the following manner: "Alas! madam, this is the kindeſt ſpeech I have heard a long time: you have convinced me that humanity and benevolence are not utterly extinguiſhed in the world. Although my appearance be at preſent ſo mean, I was born with better fortune.

tune. My father died when I was fourteen years old, and with him we loſt all ſupport. My mother did not long ſurvive this affliction, and I was left expoſed to the cruel inſults of the proſperous, and the pity of thoſe who had more humanity. My aunt hearing of my misfortune, ſent for me down to Eſſex, where, till within this fatal month, I have been ever ſince. She is a good ſort of woman, but rather ſaving, and exceedingly rigid in her principles. Her fortune is not ſo ſmall as is generally believed, but from the penurious manner in which ſhe lives, our neighbours have no idea of her wealth. With her I lived tolerably happy as a companion and ſervant; and though the ſituation of her reſidence is dreary and loneſome, I had no reaſon to complain of my fate.

"One morning my aunt ſent me to a neighbouring village on ſome trifling errand, and I was met by three gentlemen on horſeback. One of them ſwore I was a charming creature;—excuſe, madam, my preſumption in repeating this ſpeech, but you commanded me to relate the whole truth."
"I did ſo, rejoined I; pray proceed."
"This ſame gentleman alighted, and aſked me my name and place of abode; I told him,

him, little ſuſpecting his intentions. He whiſpered to the other gentlemen, and I heard them ſay ſomething in praiſe of my perſon. I finiſhed my errand, and returned home; not mentioning, however, my adventure to my aunt; and I was vain enough to be pleaſed with the notice the gentlemen had taken of me. But, madam, I will not intrude upon your patience, but briefly to inform you, that a day or two after, I again met this gentleman alone: he accoſted me, and took hold of my hand, ſaying, he would make my fortune, if I would conſent to follow him. Inexperienced as I was, I doubted his veracity, and reſolutely perſiſted in returning to my cottage. He tempted me with money, and promiſed to ſet me above ſervitude. I was proof againſt his deceit; but, finding perſuaſions would avail nothing, he, notwithſtanding my cries, forced me into a poſt-chaiſe that ſtood juſt by, and ordered the man to drive to the inn. Here I found an apartment ready, and I fainted with the apprehenſion of what might follow. Determined, however, to eſcape, if poſſible, I tried every method without ſucceſs. In about half an hour he ordered the chaiſe, and we arrived in the evening

evening at London. O! madam, 'tis impoſſible to deſcribe the agitation of my mind, when I beheld the place where I was born and educated, and had lived under the tender care and protection of parents that adored me. Yes, madam, my education has been ſuch, as thoſe who move in a higher ſphere need not to be aſhamed of. I was now in the power of my betrayer; without a friend to aſſiſt me. What could I do? Shall I own to you, madam? O! with what ſhame do I own it,—that this deceiver robbed me of my honour; robbed me of what I only valued! In vain he attempted to allure me with preſents, to conſent that I would continue to live with him in a guilty commerce; and when he found he could not prevail, he let me go. But, alas! where could I fly to? Who would receive me? I at length took courage, and went to a diſtant female relation, whom I had known in happier days, but who was likewiſe reduced to the neceſſity of getting her bread by mantua-making. To her, therefore, I applied, and ingenuouſly related my ſtory: ſhe heard me without interruption, and coolly told me, ſhe was ſorry for what had happened; but people ſhould mind their

conduct: all might be true that I had ſaid, and it might not; it looked very odd, that I ſhould be carried away by force: that, for her part, ſhe could not but believe I had conſented to be brought to London; but, however, I was welcome to ſtay in her houſe till I ſaw what manner of life would ſuit me. This coldneſs cut me to the heart; but, as I had no aſylum, no lodging but the ſtreets, I choſe rather to accept her offer, than be driven to the extreme of wretchedneſs. I have frequently written to my aunt, but have received ſuch cruel anſwers, that I can hope for no farther relief from her. I have in vain ſought a ſervice: ſome objected to my youth; ſome, becauſe I had never been in place; others fancied objections, which appeared to my diſappointed heart entirely groundleſs. To finiſh my diſtreſs, I have been reproached by my hoſteſs continually with her inability to keep me; and the little probability left of ſucceeding in my views has quite dejected me. By the greateſt chance I heard of your place; and, O madam! could I but have been ſo happy as to ſerve you, my future conduct ſhould demonſtrate how reſolved I am to live virtuouſly. My mind,

indeed,

indeed, never ſtrayed; it has ever been inclined to virtue." Thus far ſhe proceeded, and her voice then failed her. Believe me, Maria, I was touched to the ſoul by this affecting relation. The innocence of her countenance, the ſimplicity of her manner, left me no room to doubt the truth of what ſhe ſaid; and the following diſcovery too well convinced me of her ſincerity. But have you, anſwered I, never ſince ſeen the wretch who betrayed you? And did he give you nothing for your ſupport?—I have not ſeen him, madam; he would have given me a bank-note, but I diſdained to receive the wages of ſin, while I deteſted and deplored its ſlavery. Pray, rejoined I, do you not know the name of this villain? His name, madam, I believe, is Melville, for by that name his companions called him, when we firſt unluckily met, though I never heard it afterwards mentioned. "Good heavens! Is it poſſible? exclaimed I—My brother!" Judge, Mrs. Maynard, of my agitation! Happy was it for poor Sophia, that ſhe was not preſent. "Your brother!" madam, cried the aſtoniſhed, trembling girl. When I was a little recovered, I enjoined her ſecrecy in the affair;

told her nothing ſhould be wanting in my power to procure her a comfortable ſubſiſtence; and that I doubted not, from the ſentiments I had heard, but ſhe would gladly embrace an honeſt courſe of life. She anſwered me in the higheſt ſtrains of gratitude and thankfulneſs: I put two guineas in her hand, bidding her diſcharge any little debts ſhe might have contracted, and call again in the evening. I aſked her name, which ſhe ſaid was Charlotte Parker. Not willing to go far without conſulting my beſt friend, I directly went to the apartment of Mrs. Weldon, and ingenuouſly gave her the above relation. She kindly applauded my conduct, and informed me, that this unfortunate young creature would be very tenderly treated at a Mrs. Foſter's, who may be depended upon for ſobriety and honeſty: ſhe is, indeed, a worthy woman, induſtrious, benevolent, and ever ready to aſſiſt out of her little pittance, thoſe who are leſs fortunate than herſelf. She maintains an aged mother by taking in plain-work; and to her I went directly, to prepare her for the reception of Charlotte Parker, where ſhe may ſtay till we can hear of ſomething creditable and proper for her to undertake. About ſix in the

the evening I took her in a coach to Mrs. Foſter's. She told me as we were going, that her hoſteſs, on her return in the morning, aſked what ſucceſs ſhe had had: that ſhe anſwered, the place was gone; and was proceeding to inform her of what had happened, but the hard-hearted woman cut her ſhort, by telling her, ſhe was tired of keeping beggars, and inſiſted upon her moving her quarters. "Indeed, madam, purſued Charlotte, her cruel treatment hurt me exceedingly,—as my father had been very kind to her on ſeveral occaſions: but, however, I thanked her for the trouble I had given; told her, through a ſtranger's generoſity, I was enabled to diſcharge what I owed her; and then related your kind humanity; concealing only from her knowledge, that you were the ſiſter of my betrayer.—She was quite aſtoniſhed at what I ſaid, and then behaved on a ſudden ſo civil, that I was ſurprized at the change." The coach ſtopped at Mrs. Foſter's; and I delivered my charge to the good woman, with ſuitable directions. On my return home, I found Sir William and Lady Rayner, Mr. Clarendon, and Sir Philip Clendon, at cards

with the family. Mr. Clarendon came thither with Sir Philip, and was pleaſed to pay your Harriett many compliments. Oh! I had like to have forgotten Miſs Maſham, who was one of the party: this lady was very inquiſitive to know where I had been, but I evaded her impertinent queſtions. She happened to ſit at the ſame card-table with Mr. Clarendon and me. I was very inattentive to my cards, and Miſs Maſham viſibly ſhewed by her countenance a certain degree of diſpleaſure Whatever ailed me, I could not play at all: I committed ſo many palpable miſtakes, that Mr. Clarendon, though in the politeſt manner, often told me my error; and I then made ſuch aukward apologies, that, to be ſure, he muſt have laughed at my confuſion: but, indeed, my mind was very unfit to join company: this certainly accounts for my ſtupidity.—I was ruminating on what had happened; and I really felt myſelf ſo incenſed againſt my brother for his bad conduct, that, had I written to him that moment, I ſhould perhaps have reproached him in a manner too ſevere to have reclaimed him. Sir Philip ſhewed great attention to Sophia; I afterwards rallied her on her conqueſt, but her modeſty

modeſty would not permit her to believe me. She pretends great indifference on my brother's account; condemns his conduct exceedingly; pities the unfortunate ſufferer,—but is not quite ſo chearful as ſhe was. I wiſh ſhe were well married; as I fear ſhe indulges her paſſion, though, outwardly, ſhe has ſtruggled to appear ſerene. I ſhall go tomorrow to ſee Charlotte. Why did I ſay ſhe ſhould go to ſervice? Surely I had better write to her aunt; ſet forth her innocence; tell this hard-hearted woman how chance threw me in her niece's way, and intreat her to ſend a conſoling letter: but I will conceal from her the name of her ſeducer. I have taken a great liking to this unfortunate girl: her diſpoſition appears amiable, and, indeed, her perſon is very pleaſing. She is but eighteen, genteelly made, a clear complexion, middling ſtature, her eyes dark, cheſnut coloured hair, fine teeth, and her noſe well formed: the roſes ſeemed a little faded in her cheeks, but I dare ſay, if her heart were at eaſe, ſhe has a natural bloom, which muſt give great animation to her features. Poor girl! I pity thee from my ſoul! What amends can the libertine make, for reducing a young creature like

this to wretchedneſs! How frequently is unſuſpecting innocence taken at an unguarded hour! How often are unfortunate young women rendered apoſtates from virtue all their days, by one falſe ſtep! For alas! when once a woman has loſt her character, who will receive her? The world is too apt to judge from appearances; ſhe is condemned and deſpiſed by her own ſex; and too often, as if inevitably, takes that courſe of life, the wretchedneſs of which words muſt be inadequate to deſcribe. I believe I ſhall write to Charles,—yet hardly know how to act. What will expoſtulation avail with him, who is deaf to the powerful pleadings of conſcience? Adieu, my beloved friend! Make my compliments acceptable to Mr. Maynard; and pray for the reformation of her brother, who muſt ever be your affectionate

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

My dear FRIEND,

I HAD no ſooner breakfaſted this morning, than my brother knocked at the door. I was juſt going to viſit the unfortunate

tunate Charlotte Parker: Sophia begged to accompany me, and was at that inſtant gone up ſtairs to put on her hat and cloak. On her entering the room again, gueſs her ſurprize at ſeeing my brother! A thouſand ideas ſeemed to ruſh into her mind, and ſhe had hardly reſolution to return his morning ſalutation. Charles did not perceive her confuſion, and in his free eaſy manner aſked her where ſhe was going ſo early? Poor Sophia looked at me: I knew the meaning of her look, and quickly anſwered, "We are going, Charles, to ſee an unfortunate young woman, who has fallen the victim of a deſigning man; and I much fear ſhe will not long ſurvive her misfortune, as the dejection of her countenance too plainly indicates the ſtate of mind ſhe is in. O Charles! what have your ſex to anſwer for, who can baſely betray unſuſpecting innocence, and wantonly ſport with the miſery of a weak defenceleſs woman!" "Prithee, Harriett, anſwered he, why this grave, this very ſolemn addreſs? faith, I think you would make an excellent preacher. I ſuppoſe this is ſome girl who has believed our promiſes of eternal love and adoration, and

now whimpers becauſe ſhe finds herſelf miſtaken. Do, let me ſee her—I'll ſoon revive her drooping ſpirits!" "Ungenerous man! I am ſorry theſe are your ſentiments; but know then, that this pitiable girl was baſely trepanned, was taken from innocence and a rural cottage, and plunged at once into wretchedneſs and ſhame: and if you cannot gueſs her betrayer, I will help you to find him out;—I am ſorry to ſay, he now ſtands before me." Notwithſtanding Charles's effrontery he appeared viſibly confuſed at this ſudden attack, but, recovering, ſaid, "I'll be hanged if you don't mean Charlotte Parker: I ſhall be very glad to ſee her again: I dare ſay ſhe has told you a very affecting ſtory. A little fool! ſhe might have been happy if ſhe would; it was all her own fault. Am I right? Is her name Charlotte Parker?" Yes, Charles, her name is Charlotte Parker, and I will take care you ſhall not ſee her again. She has told me nothing but what truth and innocence dictated; and inſtead of its being her fault, I am perſuaded it is your crime; and thro' you and you only, that ſhe is reduced to her preſent unhappineſs. But it ſignifies not to argue with you: all that I can ſay is this, that

that whatever aſſiſtance can poſſibly be given her, ſhe ſhall receive it from the ſiſter of her betrayer; and nothing ſhall be omitted to eaſe and calm her diſtreſſed mind. She is now bereft of every friend but me: your own conſcience muſt inform you how!—I then related to him by what chance I firſt ſaw her; and, I will do him the juſtice to ſay, he ſeemed not a little affected at what I told him: but, however, added I, it is time to viſit this unhappy ſufferer:—ſo I went up ſtairs for my cloak. Mrs. Weldon entered the room as I went out. Upon my return, Charles took his leave, and I was glad to perceive a conſcious confuſion in his looks. I am certain that Sophia is more entangled than ſhe ſeems to imagine. Whilſt in the preſence of my brother her colour frequently changed, and ſhe is more fretful than uſual. We went immediately to Mrs. Foſter's: ſhe aſſured us the poor girl had not taken any nouriſhment, notwithſtanding her intreaties; and her compaſſionate heart ſhewed its concern at her eyes, which overflowed as ſhe was ſpeaking. We went up ſtairs, and found Charlotte at work, but viſibly altered even ſince I ſaw her laſt.

On ſeeing us ſhe roſe, and poured out her grateful heart in the warmeſt thanks for our kindneſs, ſaying, ſhe found the houſe ſhe was in a paradiſe, and highly extolled good Mrs. Foſter, who had treated her with the utmoſt tenderneſs. In ſhort, her ſpirits were ſo overwhelmed with gratitude, that Sophia and your friend felt deeply affected at her expreſſions. I mentioned not a word about my brother; indeed what could I ſay? I ſincerely hope ſhe may ſoon regain her health, but I much doubt it. There is a dejection in her countenance which threatens fatal effects upon her ſpirits. I aſſured her I would immediately write to her aunt, ſetting forth her innocence in the cleareſt terms, and intreat the conſolation of a kind letter. This a little comforted her, but ſhe ſeemed to fear the ſucceſs, and added, that her aunt's principles were ſo extremely rigid and ſevere, that the leaſt deviation from virtue was by her conſtrued into a crime of the deepeſt dye. How then, madam, will ſhe ever brook the apparent breach of rectitude I have committed? To elope from my only friend, muſt appear to her as the moſt flagrant guilt! To leave

her

her cottage, for the ſake of a man with whom I could not be well acquainted, and ſeek my own ruin by liſtening to his ſpecious promiſes, muſt add ingratitude, baſe ingratitude to the action! In this light muſt my conduct appear to her; and I doubt not but that I have enemies alſo, who will not palliate my errors, but diſplay them in the moſt unfavourable colours. I am the more apprehenſive of this, as there is a young woman who, for what reaſon I cannot tell, ever delighted to vex me: envy is her predominant paſſion, and ſhe frequently did me all the harm that ſo hateful a principle could dictate. But why, madam, ſhould I conceal any thing from you? She had a motive for her conduct, and I will briefly acquaint you that it is jealouſy. A very reputable neighbouring farmer has a ſon, who regarded me with a partial attention: his character is irreproachable: in ſhort, madam, we were to have been married. The young woman I juſt mentioned took every method in her power to prevent it, though ſhe could not effect the purpoſe by her inſinuations; and I can only think that her hatred to me proceeds from the love

ſhe

ſhe bears the young man who courted me. Now, madam, ſhe will indeed triumph over me!—for I verily believe it is owing entirely to her, that my aunt has ſent me ſuch cruel anſwers; and, to my great mortification, I hear ſhe is ſhortly to be married to the only man I ever loved, though, apparently, I have failed to deſerve his affections! Here ſhe burſt into tears, and the agonies of her mind threw her into a fit of inexpreſſible diſtreſs. We did all in our power to relieve her, and when ſhe was a little compoſed took our leave, not without aſſuring her, that every means ſhould be taken to re-inſtate her, if poſſible, in the favour of her friends. On my coming home I wrote immediately to her aunt, telling her every circumſtance of the affair, and I ſincerely hope it will have the deſired effect. I am ſure your benevolent heart ſympathizes with the unhappy ſufferer. I ſhall write to you again, when I receive the aunt's anſwer. Adïeu, my beloved friend! Need I aſſure you how truly I am

Your affectionate,

H. MELVILLE?

Mr.

Mr. CLARENDON to the Reverend Mr. HAMMOND.

St. James's-ſquare.

My dear FRIEND,

I SHOULD have ſooner anſwered your entertaining epiſtle, but, to be ingenuous, my thoughts have been lately ſo engaged, that I found it impoſſible to attend even to you. After ſo ſingular a declaration, why ſhould I conceal the motive that could occaſion this apparent rudeneſs? Your penetration muſt now diſcover that love is the cauſe. Yes, George, I am in love, and I really believe with perfection itſelf! My heart was, indeed, taken by ſurprize, irreſiſtibly forced to ſurrender to a multiplicity of charms. You know I am well acquainted with the Spenlove family; ſome time ago they gave a dance; I was preſent, and danced with the young lady, who alone could have cauſed this neglect of you, my valued friend. How ſhall I delineate her perſon? No deſcription can do juſtice to the fair original. She is tall, and extremely genteel; her complexion is almoſt tranſparent; and the bluſhing hue of the roſe cannot be compared to the bloom on her cheeks. How widely

widely different is the ſtudied gloſs of art, to nature unadorned! Her eyes are the fineſt blue I ever beheld; her noſe and mouth anſwer to the correcteſt rules of beauty; her teeth are whiter than ivory, and when ſhe ſmiles, a dimple in the left cheek renders her lovely countenance bewitching indeed: her hair is of the lighteſt brown, for powder and pomatum have not ſullied the beauty of its colour. But it is in vain to enumerate the thouſand graces of her perſon; and ſurely, if the countenance be an index of the ſoul, every virtue muſt inhabit the breaſt of this inimitable lady. She is void of all that affectation ſo peculiar to many of her ſex; there is a noble ſincerity in her manner, a gracefulneſs in all her actions, which it is beyond my ability to deſcribe. In ſhort, I became her captive that evening; and the next morning, when I called to enquire after her, the chains ſhe held me in were rivetted ſtronger than before. The lady's name is Harriett Melville: the unaffected ſimplicity with which ſhe received my enquiries after her health delighted me: I have ſince ſeen her again. Sir Philip Clendon, with whom I am acquainted, met me

me the other afternoon, and told me, if I was not better engaged, he would introduce me in the company he was going to viſit; adding, there is a very elegant girl there, and I am ſure you can want no other inducement. Little did I think he meant my lovely Harriett,—and I would have excuſed myſelf. Well, ſaid he, what a ſtupid fellow art thou! Miſs Melville is a charming girl, and as thou haſt once ſeen her, I did not ſuppoſe thou wouldeſt deny this requeſt of a friend. At the mention of her beloved name, I found it difficult to conceal my emotion, and told him I retracted from what I had ſaid, and would readily accompany him. On our entering the room, I looked about for the lady, but in vain: you may imagine I immediately enquired after her, and Mrs. Weldon told me ſhe would return preſently, but was gone out on a little buſineſs. I waited with the greateſt impatience till her arrival: At laſt the door opened, and my lovely Harriett appeared—

"Grace was in all her ſteps; Heaven in her eye;
"In every geſture dignity and love!"

She paid her compliments to all preſent with a ſweetneſs and modeſty peculiar to herſelf,

herſelf, and I had the inexpreſſible pleaſure of playing at cards with her. She ſeemed very much confuſed; but this I was led to attribute to ſome accident that might have happened while ſhe was out. Sir Philip Clendon and Miſs Maſham made up our party. This lady is very conceited; I had hardly patience with her. She appeared ſo curious to know where Miſs Melville had been, that I wondered the latter could bear her impertinence. Miſs Maſham is about twenty-five, and, with the aſſiſtance of not a little art, ſhe might be thought perfectly handſome; but I cannot conceive how women can be ſuch fools, as to imagine that men do not ſee. They may think that paint, patches and powder can obliterate or conceal defects; they may put on affectation and conceit, by rule and ſyſtem; but ſurely a diſcerning eye muſt ſoon ſee through the thin veil that ſeeks to cover or diſguiſe their native imperfections. You know, George, I am very particular. You have frequently ſaid, lucky is the woman that pleaſes me! But, ſhall I own to you, I never before ſaw the woman with whom I could have the leaſt idea of forming a ſerious connection? Should I be ſo fortu-

as

nate as to make myſelf agreeable to this lady, I am perſuaded a farther acquaintance will not make me repent what I have written and anticipate in her favour. My dear father, who is the moſt generous of men, has often declared, that to ſee me happily married, would be his greateſt comfort; but that he would never direct my choice on ſo important a point, which ſhould be totally left to myſelf. I will not abuſe his goodneſs, and ſhould be the moſt ungrateful of all human beings, to do any thing contrary to his inclination. But I need not fear the want of his conſent, whenever my choice is fixed, and that indeed is now unalterably determined. My mind is quite abſorpt in thinking of Miſs Melville; and could I be certain of ſecuring an intereſt in her eſteeem, I need not add how happy it will render,

Dear George,

Your ſincere friend,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

My dear MARIA,

HOW ſhall I recount to you the affecting ſcene at which I have juſt been preſent! Poor Charlotte is very ill indeed. Not all the kind attention of good Mrs. Foſter, nor the little aſſiſtance I can afford her, are capable of reſtoring her to ſerenity. But before I begin, pray peruſe the following letter from her cruel aunt, which I cannot tranſcribe without pain:

MADAM,

I RECEIVED your letter, and immediately ſet about anſwering it. I am ſorry ſuch ladies as you are encouragers of wickedneſs. How ſhall religion and virtue flouriſh, if crimes of the blackeſt dye are countenanced?—My niece is the moſt ungrateful huſſey that ever lived. I took her from poverty and miſery, and placed her in a comfortable, though not affluent ſituation; and then, at the firſt opportunity, ſhe eloped from me, and ruſhed into the arms of a man ſhe knew nothing of. Let him maintain her; but I ſuppoſe he has done with

with her now, or ſhe would not have made out ſo fine a ſtory to you. To my certain knowledge ſhe ſlily had ſeveral meetings with the fellow,—at leaſt my neighbours are all aſſured of it;—and I cannot but believe it was entirely with her own conſent that ſhe went to London. Now ſhe finds the man is falſe, ſhe pretends, I ſuppoſe, great repentance. As to her illneſs, diſappointment, I can eaſily imagine, cauſes that. All that I can ſay is this, that I have done with her; for ingratitude and wantonneſs ſhall never be encouraged by me. Though I am poor, thank God, I am honeſt; and I am ſure religion and virtue, as I ſaid before, can never flouriſh, whilſt vice is encouraged. I have told her all this, and much more, for ſhe has juſt acquainted me with your humanity, as ſhe calls it. To make her conduct appear worſe, ſhe was juſt going to be married to a very worthy man; but he now only pities and deſpiſes her. There are other young women here-abouts; one in particular, that I believe will ſupply her place. But I need not trouble you, madam, with my ſcrawl. I am not uſed to writing, ſo pray excuſe it. I wiſh you may not repent of your kindneſs to this unworthy girl; but ſhe has a mild manner, and may impoſe upon

upon any body. She can write too, for I have received ſeveral epiſtles from her lately, that might have melted the heart of thoſe not acquainted with her conduct. But ſuch behaviour ſhall never be forgiven by me; therefore I remain, madam, your humble ſervant,

CATHERINE FLINTER.

Sunday evening.

Here is a letter, Maria! What do you think of it? Very tender and pious, and much like a Chriſtian truly! but I leave it to the animadverſion of you and your good man, and proceed to relate what paſſed betwixt me and poor Charlotte. I found her in bed, confined by the ſevere attack of a fever, which had ſeized her the preceding night. "My dear madam, ſaid ſhe, how can I, how ſhall I repay your goodneſs? My only conſolation is, that your generous mind muſt receive pleaſure to reflect from what miſery you have ſaved an unhappy fellow creature! For had I not ſeen You, the cold ſtreets muſt now have been my miſerable lodging; or, perhaps, in a wretched garret, I might have periſhed without even the common neceſſaries of life: inſtead of which, here I am ſupplied with every

every thing my heart can desire." She would have proceeded, but I intreated her to be silent upon this subject, and added, I was sorry to see her in bed. "Indeed, madam, I would have got up, but my good Mrs. Foster prevented me: I feel I cannot trouble my friends long;—I am, indeed, very ill." She uttered this so movingly, that I could not refrain from shedding a tear, which she perceiving, said, "It grieves me, dear madam, to disturb so much goodness. How unhappy I am to be the unworthy cause! But pray, madam, do pardon me;—yet I dread to ask: Have you received any letter from my aunt? and if you have, might I be favoured with the perusal of it?" I have received a letter, said I; and wish I could say it was a kind one: you had better not read it just now. "O no, madam, answered she, I intreat you will indulge me: She can have said nothing but what I fully expect; do pray let me see it!" She spoke this so earnestly, that I was obliged to comply, and gave it to her. She read the first half very composedly; but when she came to that part which insinuates, that the young man was going to be married to another,

another, "Good heavens! exclaimed ſhe, it is as I feared: can he then ſo ſoon forget his Charlotte? But I am unworthy of him. Oh, the art of my falſe companion!—Inſtead of pitying her poor friend, ſhe exults in my downfall, and will ſupply my place. Ah, madam! forgive me; but if you knew the affection there was between my dear Henry and me, you would pity my ſituation indeed." She then finiſhed the letter, and returned it, ſaying, "I am ſure my aunt is ſet on by my rival to write ſo cruelly; but now life is not worth having—I ſhall die contented: but yet it is bitter to bear. If Henry had been a little concerned for me, ſure it would have more ſuited the natural turn of his generous heart." I anſwered, "Indeed Charlotte, you muſt not talk thus; the ways of Providence are inſcrutable: do not ſay there is nothing worth living for; you may yet be happy; and it would make me truly ſo, to be at all inſtrumental to your welfare. I will write to the young man; tell him every thing about you; and bid him not be prejudiced by appearances, but wait till your innocence is cleared, before he enters into new engagements; nay, if you deſire it, I will invite

invite him to London, and you ſhall ſee him yourſelf. "O madam! ſaid ſhe, I cannot ſee him—I cannot look him in the face; pray do not let him come; if he can forget me ſo ſoon, may he be happy!" I begged her to be more compoſed; and aſſured her I would not do any thing againſt her will: indeed, I began to fear her head was rambling; and ſaid, I would ſend a gentleman of the faculty to attend her. It is impoſſible to deſcribe her gratitude; ſhe lifted up her folded hands, crying, "Gracious heaven reward this goodneſs! I cannot: But, may every bleſſing be ſhowered down upon my amiable benefactreſs! May ſhe never feel the diſtreſs I have felt, but reap the fruits of ſuch true benevolence and pity. And, Oh may the ſame gracious power forgive every enemy I have, particularly him that has brought me to my preſent ſituation! May he ſee the error of his way, and reform before it be too late! May he live to prove a comfort and protection to his ſiſter!" She agitated herſelf ſo much, that I intreated her to be compoſed, and leave the determination of every event to that beneficent Diſpoſer, who orders all things for the beſt.

I ſoothed her diſturbed mind, as well as my own could ſuggeſt; uſed every argument I could think of for this purpoſe; and aſſured her, I would ever be her friend, if it ſhould pleaſe God to reſtore her health. She only anſwered, "God bleſs you, madam!" Her ſtrength failed her, and ſhe ſeemed quite exhauſted. I entreated her not to let any anxiety dwell upon her ſpirits, as that was the only thing which could moſt likely retard her recovery. I then called in Mrs. Foſter, enjoined her to keep her charge as quiet as poſſible, and took my leave. On my return I immediately ſent our apothecary to Mrs. Foſter's, and begged he would call at our houſe, to acquaint me what he thought of his patient. I found Lady Rayner in my cloſet with Sophia, who had informed her ladyſhip of the whole affair. Her generous heart was moved; nor did words merely expreſs her concern: ſhe gave me five guineas for the unhappy Charlotte.

11 o'clock at night.

I could not cloſe my letter till I had heard more. The apothecary thinks the poor girl is in much danger; he is a man of great

ſkill

ſkill and aſſiduity, and I am certain will do every thing proper: her fever is increaſed very much ſince I ſaw her; I hope ſhe will recover! but doubt it. Should ſhe not, how muſt her implacable aunt repent her cruelty! I find Charlotte has juſt received another letter from Eſſex; ſhe ſent it unopened for my peruſal: 'tis to tell her that the young man is gone to ſea. He did not previouſly acquaint his family of his intention, but left a letter behind him, ſignifying, that the conduct of Charlotte gave him ſo much uneaſineſs, that he had reſolved to take this method, to endeavour to forget her; that, notwithſtanding the perſuaſions of his friends, he could not think of entering into any other engagement; that no woman beſide the object of his diſtreſs could compenſate for his unhappy diſappointment; and he really expreſſes himſelf in ſuch generous terms, that I am quite pleaſed with him. I had deſired, if any letters came directed to Charlotte, they might immediately be forwarded to me, as I judged they would only aggravate her diſtreſs, and retard her recovery. I ſhall, however, acquaint her with this intelligence as ſoon as it is deemed proper, ſince it may give her

ſome conſolation to ſee the concern of the young man. This ſubject has ſo wholly engroſſed my attention, that I believe I have not mentioned any other. I will conclude to night; and before the poſt ſets out to-morrow, will write you, if I can, ſomething concerning our own family. Adieu. I remain your truly affectionate friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

The Rev. Mr. HAMMOND, to HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq.

AND ſo, my friend, you are at laſt caught! I give you joy. I ſee indeed you are in love. May you prove ſucceſsful, and happily wear the gentleſt yoke of Hymen! Your deſcription of the lady is like a lover——perfection itſelf! How pleaſed ſhall I be to render my devoirs to ſo extraordinary a being! But have a care, Clarendon, leſt you deceive yourſelf. You can as yet have had but very little acquaintance with the fair enchanter. I do not doubt your taſte; but as the perfections of the mind moſt commonly tend, in a married ſtate, to render the adventurers permanently happy,

happy, take my advice, and do not declare your affection too haſtily. What a miſerable dilemma is the man reduced to, who is taken with a pretty face, and then fancies his miſtreſs all perfection,—without once taking time to conſider whether her temper be ſuch as will render him happy! In the days of courtſhip, the lady is generally exalted to a goddeſs, or at leaſt an angel, and then the lover is miſerably miſtaken to find her after marriage reduced to a mere mortal. The diſpoſition of the lady is principally to be conſidered. In diſappointment and vexation, ſee how ſhe conducts herſelf: view her at home, in domeſtick life, whether ſhe is humble and obliging there, and juſtly beloved by her own family. In many trifling inſtances the real temper is beſt ſhewn. Haughtineſs to inferiors generally indicates a groveling mind. I would not infer, my friend, from theſe cautions, that the lady in queſtion is at all addicted to either of the above mentioned infirmities of temper; but a ſtriking inſtance which has lately happened to a friend of mine, is the only motive of my writing thus freely; and, as example is more prevailing than precept, permit me

to relate the ſtory. A gentleman of moderate fortune ſaw a young lady, and, as the ſaying is, fell in love with her: nothing could exceed the violence of his paſſion; ſhe appeared all perfection. After two or three viſits he declared himſelf, and during the time of his courtſhip he had frequent opportunities to diſcover the changeableneſs of her temper. On many occaſions likewiſe he ſaw affectation and conceit were interwoven in the very texture of her nature: particularly one day a party of pleaſure was made, to go upon the water, and enjoy an elegant entertainment provided in the barge: they all ſet out, but the weather happening to change a little for the worſe, cauſed the water to be unuſually rough: Though not the leaſt danger attended, the lady ſcreamed at every movement of the barge, and made herſelf ſo truly ridiculous, that the whole company heartily deſpiſed her: ſhe treated him with behaviour not a little bordering on inſolence: the diverſion of the day was entirely ſpoiled; and though the wind blew a little freſh, they would have enjoyed their repaſt, if every tendency to mirth and feſtivity had not been broken into

into by the behaviour of this lady. At length the day ended, and they got into the carriage to go home: every tree they met was a robber; every noiſe was the report of a piſtol. In ſhort, after many alarms and much difficulty, they arrived at home, unhurt, unmoleſted; and the lady vowed nothing ſhould induce her to take ſo much fatigue again; a reſolution, which, if ſhe kept to it, muſt be greatly to the ſatisfaction of her companions.

My friend could not help ſeeing what little proſpect he had of felicity with a lady of this temper, but he had declared himſelf her lover, and was really enamoured with her perſon. There could be no retracting. He reflected that ſuch a wife would neither ſuit his inclinations nor his fortune, which, though independent, would not allow of being laviſhed by caprice and extravagance. The lady, however, ſhewed no diſlike of his perſon or connections, and ſhe gave him all the tokens of eſteem of which ſhe was capable. A friend of his dying about this time, he was obliged to leave her for a fortnight, and go down into the country to ſettle ſome affairs. By an unavoidable accident his return was poſtponed for a

month; and, to his great ſurprize, he then found another lover had paid his addreſſes, and was received by the lady with the warmeſt marks of approbation. She could not reſiſt the dazzling attraction of a ſplendid fortune and a coach-and-ſix. My friend's indignation could only be equalled by his aſtoniſhment, you may imagine: he wrote her a letter, filled with ſuch expreſſions as his ſituation naturally dictated. Had he been of a revengeful temper he had no occaſion to indulge it in a duel: a few months would have given him ample ſatisfaction: her huſband deſpiſes her cordially; they hardly ſpeak with civility, and ſhe reſents his contempt by railing at him when abſent, and accuſing him when preſent; while the gentleman in queſtion pities her ſincerely, though at the ſame time I believe he ſecretly rejoices at having eſcaped the infelicity of ſuch an union. May your opinion of Miſs Melville be juſt! Nay, I am perſuaded it is; but I hope you will nevertheleſs be more aſſured of her perfections, before you declare yourſelf her lover. My friend, it is the goodneſs of your heart, and the intereſt I have in your felicity, that embolden me to take the liberty of adviſing

adviſing you. Our friendſhip, is, I truſt, founded on ſo ſolid a baſis, that no ſlight blaſt can ſhake the fabric. I often with pleaſure reflect on our former happy life, when we received inſtruction from the beſt of men, and reaped the fruits of his pious admonitions: never ſhall I forget his precepts, nor his tender care of us. I will not pretend to diſpute which is moſt beneficial, a private or a public tuition; but experience informs me how delightful the former has been: had it pleaſed Heaven to have ſpared my father's life, I ſhould now indeed have great delight and benefit from his converſation; but he juſt lived to compleat his taſk of forming our minds, whilſt he matured his own, and then reſigned his ſoul to the mercy of his Maker. He often expreſſed the pleaſure he felt, in being intruſted with the education of ſo diſtinguiſhed a gentleman as yourſelf; not only diſtinguiſhed by the gifts of fortune, but by the more advantageous endowments of nature. Your excellent father now reaps the harveſt of his good intention; and ſees his heir poſſeſs every requiſite that can render him uſeful to others, and happy in himſelf. I am going to-morrow to viſit

an old acquaintance, a brother clergyman in Devonſhire, who is lately married. I have heard great encomiums of his lady's beauty and underſtanding. My friend's name is Maynard: you have ſeen him, he is a very worthy man. I am ſure it is the wiſh of Sir James Clarendon to ſee you happily married. May you chooſe with prudence; and if your preſent choice is unalterably determined, may the lady prove worthy of my friend! I ſhall write on my arrival at Mr. Maynard's, and pray do not let the lovely Harriett ſo much engroſs every idea, as to render you forgetful of

Your affectionate,

GEO. HAMMOND.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

WILL you believe me, my dear Maria, that my time is ſo taken up, I am obliged to riſe thus early, as it is now but ſeven o'clock! But, indeed, this is not a hardſhip; I have ever been accuſtomed to it; and no occupation can be

be a greater inducement than employing my pen for the ſatisfaction of my partial friends. I promiſed in my laſt to write ſomething concerning our own family, but nothing particular has happened. We ſee a great deal of company. Mr. Clarendon is frequently here; he ſeems to have taken a great liking to Mr. Weldon; he is very entertaining, and without any idle flattery, univerſally polite. I have lately ſeen Miſs Spenlove; ſhe tells me Mr. Darnton paid her a viſit the other day, and begged her to uſe all the influence he knew ſhe had over me, to intreat me to admit his addreſſes. And pray, ſaid I, what anſwer did you make? "O, replied the ſaucy girl, I aſſured him you was extremely mortified at his not continuing to importune you on this ſubject; that you had a little *penchant* for him, though you would not confeſs it; but no doubt, if he perſiſted in his importunities, you would at laſt comply." I told her I did not believe her, and that ſhe was a ſecond Mrs. Maynard; but intreated to know what ſhe really did ſay to Mr. Darnton: her anſwer was what I wiſhed: "that ſhe was certain, if my determina-

tion was so frankly declared, I should abide by it; and that at present I had no thoughts of marrying; but when I did, my heart should go with my hand." She says he did not appear satisfied, but left her rather abruptly. I am very happy in the thought of visiting you: my impatince increases daily; and yet you will not be angry when I own I feel a little regret at the idea of parting with my London friends. Sophia is pretty well, and unites in love and compliments to you. I remain yours,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

HENRY CLARENDON, Esq; to the Rev. GEO. HAMMOND.

THANK you, dear George, for your friendly admonitions; I acknowledge their great importance, and the situation of your friend fully demonstrates the solidity and truth of your reasoning. I am well persuaded that so many unhappy matches proceed, in a great measure, from a want of due attention to the objects you have particularized; but I believe I may

may venture to affirm there is no danger of its happening in my own caſe. I have frequently been in Miſs Melville's company ſince I wrote to you, and I daily diſcover ſo many attractive qualities in her diſpoſition, that it is impoſſible to reſiſt the united charms of her perſon and mind. Notwithſtanding your letter, I have already ſpoken to my father on the ſubject: my heart overflows with love and gratitude at the generous confidence he places in me. When I had opened my mind to him, he anſwered me in the following manner:

"My dear Henry, in this important affair your choice ſhall be mine: I have ſo full a truſt in your prudence, that I am perſuaded you will never diſgrace yourſelf, or your family. There are ſo many daily inſtances of unhappineſs, produced merely from a contrary conduct in fathers, that I am determined to avoid acting in ſo unnatural a way: I therefore repeat, your choice ſhall be mine; and be aſſured, my dear Harry, to ſee you happily married will doubly add to my ſatisfaction."

You know my heart, George; ſo I leave you to imagine how I was affected by this

this parental candour, and you may be assured my acknowledgments were replete with the highest sentiments of gratitude and obedience. I most heartily join in your filial eulogium; and when I reflect to whom it is owing that we possess the advantages of education, and the principles of virtue and religion, I am deeply affected at losing that worthy man, and concerned that he is taken out of a world where he employed his time so well; but as it has pleased the beneficent Author of all things to remove your excellent father, believe me, the affection I retained for him, and the just idea I had of his virtue and goodness, can never be obliterated whilst his son lives. He seems to have transmitted to you the benevolence of his disposition, and you only want his experience to render your judgment as secure, and your knowledge as extensively useful: you had, indeed, a fair pattern to copy, and, I doubt not, the transcript will be full as amiable as the original. I think I remember the name of Maynard: By the time this reaches you I imagine you will be arrived in Devonshire. I am a frequent visitor at Mr. Weldon's; they are a very amiable family,

but

but I honeſtly confeſs it is the lovely Harriett that principally draws me thither. Should I be happy enough to recommend myſelf to her, I would not change conditions with the greateſt monarch. It only now remains to gain her eſteem: there appears no other obſtacle to prevent my wiſhes; and if the moſt conſtant aſſiduity, joined with the pureſt flame that ever poſſeſſed any heart, will prove effectual, I ſhall be the moſt enviable of men. Be aſſured, much as my thoughts are engaged about the charming Harriett, nothing can hinder me from feeling how ſincerely I am,

Your affectionate friend,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

I AM greatly in your debt, my dear Harriett, for ſeveral letters, and am mortified to find myſelf not ſufficiently at leiſure now to anſwer them as they deſerve. You have ſurprized, ſhocked, and charmed me. I am ſurprized at the ſtory you have related; ſhocked at the author of the poor girl's unhappineſs, and charmed

ed with the manner in which you have endeavoured to relieve her. I ſincerely ſympathize with her, and if a certain gentleman were not your brother, I ſhould not paſs over his conduct in ſilence. What a letter is that of the cruel aunt! I cannot ſay but I wiſh ſhe may repent of what ſhe has written. Religion and virtue! Merciful God! how dare ſhe profane them by ſo vile a perverſion of their principles! She can have no juſt idea, I am ſure, of either; and it is by ſuch perſons as her profeſſing what they have no real title to, that a ſcandal is brought on the names of piety and good morals. Surely the precepts of that religion we profeſs are benevolent and charitable. Mercy is an attribute of God himſelf, nor can we ever appear in a more advantageous light, than when we imitate the benign virtues of our Maker. But, alas! ſuch univerſal philanthropy is too ſeldom practiſed: if it were general, there certainly would be more advocates for virtue and religion, whoſe example would enforce their cauſe far better than all the doctrines of learned ſpeculation. You ſee, Harriett, how ſerious I am grown by being married, though you know

know I can be very ſerious on proper ſubjects. You may ſuſpect that I have borrowed a page or two from one of Mr. Maynard's ſermons: I have not been guilty of plagiary, but I venture to affirm it is the genuine language of his heart. All this time I imagine you are wondering why I have not time to anſwer your letters as I ought, whilſt you, who live in the giddy circle of pleaſure, can write ſo much. To this I anſwer, that if I were entirely at leiſure, I could never anſwer your letters in a manner ſuitable to my ſenſe of their value. A gentleman is juſt arrived, an intimate friend of Mr. Maynard's, whom we have expected ſome time; he is now below, and I am quite impatient to ſee him, as my good man gives him ſuch a character for politeneſs, learning, and every mental qualification, that it might almoſt make one repent the being married; nay, I told Maynard ſo. He ſmiled and ſaid, whatever *I* might think, he ſhould never repent of the choice *he* had made. To do the man juſtice, he ſtill continues civil enough; and civility, as you certainly know, is a great recommendation in a huſband. I think I will

not

not make my appearance till dinner, and as I am already dreſſed, it will be no hardſhip to devote half an hour to my dear Harriett. You ſay Mr. Clarendon is frequently at your houſe, and that he ſeems to have taken a great liking to Mr. Weldon; now, ſeriouſly, can you believe it?—Mr. Weldon is certainly a very agreeable man, but ſurely he alone would not be a ſufficient attraction for a gay young gentleman. Ah, my friend! and do you really think I have ſo little penetration as not to diſcover who it is that engages the abovementioned gentleman's attention? Mind if my words are not prophetick. It is either you, or the amiable Sophia: But, all circumſtances conſidered, I rather think Harriett Melville is the perſon. You may look very grave if you pleaſe, and feign great diſpleaſure at what I have ſaid, and at what I am about to ſay, but ſo ſure as I am now ſitting at a writing table, Mr. Clarendon is the happy man. You have acknowledged him univerſally polite, without any idle flattery, and had he applied to Miſs Spenlove, I hope ſhe would have given him a very different anſwer from what ſhe ſaid to Mr. Darnton. I do not like that Mr. Darnton, and hope you will

hear

hear no more of him. But it is dinner time, and my good man is impatient: I muſt go and ſee our new gueſts. I will not cloſe my letter till evening.

Saturday evening.

O Harriett! ſuch a diſcovery! but let your curioſity be quiet till I chooſe to ſatisfy it. Firſt I will deſcribe our gueſt: he has lately taken orders, is about five and twenty, and his perſon very agreeable. His converſation is entertaining, yet blended with inſtruction: he appears to have wit at will, when he chooſes to exert the agreeable talent; but I am ſure, I never ſhall think him half ſo pleaſing as when he converſes on a certain ſubject, which was by the greateſt chance brought *ſur le tapis*. I ſhall paſs over the introductory compliments at meeting, as likewiſe our converſation at dinner, which conſiſted chiefly of common topics; but at tea time, he obſerved a miniature picture very attentively, that hung over the chimney; it is my brother's, who is gone to ſea. Seeing Mr. Hammond (for that is his name) look at it uncommonly earneſt, I begged to know if he was acquainted with the original? No, madam, anſwered he; but

I never

I never ſaw ſo ſtrong a reſemblance as it bears to a friend of mine. I from mere curioſity ſaid, I ſhould like to know the name of a gentleman that ſo much reſembles my brother? His name, madam, ſaid he, is Clarendon; and a more accompliſhed, polite, or amiable man never breathed! O, thought I, now ſhall I know the real character of this gentleman. But, willing to be certain if he were the ſame that frequents Albemarle-ſtreet, I aſked the place of his abode, and his connections: being ſatisfied in theſe particulars, it was eaſy to bring Mr. Hammond to talk of his friend; and never did I hear ſo great, ſo good a character as he gave him. He informed us, that Mr. Clarendon and himſelf were educated together, under the tuition of old Mr. Hammond, the father of our friend; and that from a boy he always poſſeſſed ſo noble a diſpoſition, that he was an honour and a real credit to his inſtructor. He added, "My friend, madam, is the only ſon of Sir James Clarendon, whoſe chief comfort he is; and Sir James has often declared, that to ſee him well married, would be his greateſt felicity. I believe, added he, there is a Lady whom he greatly admires,

admires, and could Mr. Clarendon render himſelf agreeable to her, the happineſs of both father and ſon would be compleated." Judge, Harriett, how I longed to know the name of this Lady! I therefore very innocently, or rather artfully, aſked him the name of this dread arbitreſs of the fate of his friend. "Ah, female curioſity, ſaid Mr. Maynard! perhaps, my dear, this is a ſecret?" He ſpoke thus, I believe, to tantalize me; for he well knew the motive of my aſking: however, Mr. Hammond replied, "I fancy my friend cannot wiſh to conceal ſo beloved a name, and I think it is of no conſequence here; as I imagine Mrs. Maynard is not acquainted with Miſs Harriett Melville." "And pray why, anſwered I, ſhould you think ſo? What would you ſay if this Lady were my intimate friend? Mr. Clarendon might then owe ſome little obligation to me; for I flatter myſelf I have ſome influence over her." And is it really ſo? anſwered he; if it be, let me, dear madam, in the name of my worthy friend, intreat you to uſe that influence you poſſeſs, to forward his paſſion. Will you, Harriett, forgive me, when I tell you, I promiſed him I would?

and

and I knew not a better method than to relate impartially our diſcourſe. Now do not affect to me any reſerve; tell me ſincerely, whether you think your heart in the leaſt prefers Mr. Clarendon? Conſider, ſo ſerious is the affair, it will not bear trifling with. You may, if you pleaſe, uſe a little more reſerve to others; but I expect real ſincerity. Mr. Hammond is a truly worthy man; to-morrow we are to have a ſpecimen of his oratorical powers; Mr. Maynard reſigns the pulpit to his friend. I expect eloquence and perſpicuity in his diſcourſe, and truſt from his manner I ſhall not be diſappointed. I have written ſo long, that I am ſummoned by the gentle call of ſleep to leave off; and if throughout my letter any dullneſs or inaccuracy appears, you muſt attribute my errors to the above-mentioned cauſe. Adieu! I ſhall have Sunday morning here, before I aſſure you, how truly I am,

Your affectionate friend,

MARIA MAYNARD.

The Rev. Mr. HAMMOND to HENRY CLARENDON, Esq.

Parsonage-house.

My dear FRIEND,

YOUR last found me at Mr. Maynard's rural retreat. This is a delightful situation, indeed. Nature so much predominates here, that she is only assisted, not eclipsed. The house, the garden, the grounds, shew the just taste of the hospitable owner. I believe I observed to you, that my friend is lately married, and by mere chance I have found that his lady is the bosom friend of Miss Melville! You need not be under any apprehension from the disposition of your beloved. I am now much better acquainted with the character of the amiable Harriett than yourself. These ladies, from their earliest infancy, contracted the greatest friendship for each other, and whenever they were for any time separated, a mutual correspondence ensued. Never did I hear so engaging a character as that of Miss Melville, and given too by one of her own sex, who is herself beautiful and accomplished, and appears to be a competent judge

judge of right and wrong. She informed me that Miſs Melville's mother was the moſt excellent of women, and inſtructed her beauteous child in every external and moral qualification, which could render her accompliſhed in perſon and mind: that when ſhe was fourteen, that worthy lady died, and Miſs Melville became the companion and houſe-keeper of her father. This gentleman having very bad health, was confined a great while before his death totally in the country; his daughter devoted her whole time in endeavouring to divert and give comfort to her only parent; and, added Mrs. Maynard, "Harriett never appeared ſo truly lovely, as when employed in thoſe tender offices of filial duty." I find Mr. Melville died very rich, and that he was a good ſort of man, but loved his money too well, and was rather fretful in temper. He left one ſon, to whom the real eſtate deſcends, a very wild young man, who, by all accounts, will ſpend that fortune which his father had been ſo long hoarding up and improving. Indeed, my dear friend, I think Miſs Melville is a lady capable of rendering any man happy, eſpecially one whoſe ſentiments are ſo congenial,

and

and ſimilar to her own. Have a good heart; and I doubt not your aſſiduity and reſpect will ſoon excite in her gentle boſom that ſort of eſteem, which generally terminates in a more tender paſſion. Adieu! And believe me to be your truly affectionate

GEORGE HAMMOND.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

BEFORE I anſwer the latter part of my dear Maria's letter, let me inform her of the ſtate of poor Charlotte's health: ſhe has been very ill ſince I wrote laſt; ſo bad, that we had little hopes of her recovery; but the ſkill of her attendants, and the bleſſing of God, has greatly reſtored her. She received much comfort to find her lover had not totally forgotten her, though ſhe frequently laments his cruel diſappointment, expoſed, as ſhe ſays, to the dangers of the ſea, and having left his friends and occupation for her ſake. But above all, ſhe cannot bear to reflect what a bad opinion he muſt have of her, and how he muſt be agi-

tated with the bitter alternatives of love, contempt, and hatred. "My conduct, madam, ſhe once ſaid, muſt appear to him not only ungrateful, but ſhocking; for had he been convinced of my innocence, nothing could have hindered his following me to London, in hopes of reſcuing me from my unhappy ſituation. But, he is gone—and may God protect him! For my own part, I will endeavour to blot out the paſt, and ſpend my remaining days in praying, not only for his ſafety, but what is now ſo far from my heart, inward peace. O had I but ſome little retreat, where I could live unknown! I think by the aids of religion I might then find reſt." I always endeavour to comfort her, though I do not approve of her living in ſolitude, as ſhe would then indulge her grief too much. When ſhe is more recovered, I think to propoſe her as a ſort of boarder and companion to Mrs. Foſter. She lives in a very retired part of the town indeed, but the ſituation is chearful, and the converſation of this good woman will greatly tend to alleviate her affliction.

Now I will anſwer the other part of your letter, and without reſerve: I like the deſcription of your new gueſt exceedingly.

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And ſo you really think you have made a very fine diſcovery; and you promiſed to exert all the influence you have over me? But to do what? Can you tell me? Mr. Clarendon has never made any propoſals of marriage to me. What then are you to perſuade me to do? Would you have me aſk the queſtion? Or am I to be quite ready if he ſhould condeſcend to aſk me? He is to be ſure very polite, very attentive; but that he is to every one; and I dare ſay he has no more idea of marrying me, than I have of marrying him. But, to be ſerious, let me anſwer that awful queſtion in your letter, "Whether my heart in the leaſt "prefers Mr. Clarendon?" Dear Maria! how can you write thus? Prefer him! No; my heart is yet my own; nor is there a man living with whom I could think of entering into a ſerious connexion. I am now happy; few cares intrude upon me; the day paſſes pleaſantly; and I can never expect in the married ſtate ſuch perfect contentment. Marriage is all a lottery; happy are they who have drawn a prize like yours. But, what cares, what anxieties do we ruſh into, when we reſign our liberty to the power of a huſband! I know

you will ſay, "Ah Harriett! you ſpeak a very different language now, from that you uſed when *I* was deliberating on this ſubject." True, Maria; but conſider what was *your* ſituation, and conſider *mine*. You was left entirely to yourſelf, at ſo early an age, that, though I did not doubt your prudence, yet in the place where you then lived, the leaſt deviation from its rules would have been conſtrued perhaps as a want of that rectitude of heart, which you ſo eminently poſſeſs; and you had alſo an independent fortune, which but the more expoſed you to the adulations of deſigning men. Mr. Maynard had given you various proofs of the ſincerity of his paſſion: I knew you eſteemed him, and you could not do better than to accept ſo worthy a man. Now conſider *my* preſent ſituation: 'Tis true, Heaven has bereft me of my parents; but that loſs is in ſome meaſure ſupplied by a groupe of the moſt worthy friends that ever girl was bleſſed with. Mrs. Weldon is a ſecond mother to me; her amiable daughter my companion; and if it were not for my brother's groſs miſconduct, I could be the happieſt of beings. I am now very young, and utterly unfit to take upon me the duties

of

of a family; for when they are once undertaken, they ought to be moſt punctually diſcharged, and that obedience which is vowed at the Altar, ſhould be religiouſly adhered to. Beſides, I have another reaſon, and a very weighty one it is: I have not been long enough acquainted with any man, to know his temper and diſpoſition ſufficiently. I have had ſeveral offers from perſons, who,—taken perhaps with a ſmall ſhare of external acquirements,—have never thought whether nature or education had given me thoſe mental qualifications, ſo eſſential to render the former valuable. Now what can ſuch an union produce? A recent example of a dear friend of mine convinces me of its infelicity. Surely men are deceitful creatures at beſt! See them in the days of courtſhip: they are all condeſcenſion, reſpect, and flattery. Mark them when they become huſbands; how they expect the goddeſs they have adored to become the ſlave of their caprice, and entirely obedient to their commands! Very often indeed our ſex are full as culpable as they. Before marriage we exact too much; and then we cannot ſink to the level of a domeſtick relative complacency. Thus each de-

ceives the other; and both alike find themſelves miſerably miſtaken. This, however, is not always the caſe; Heaven forbid it ſhould! Nor would it, in my humble opinion, happen at all, if marriage were never to take place until the parties had ſufficiently tried and known each other's diſpoſition; and if, when the knot is unalterably tied, the ſame deſire of pleaſing, inſtead of being relinquiſhed, were only the more ardently exerted. What Lord Lyttelton ſays on this head, is equally applicable to either party:

Think not, the huſband gain'd, that all is done;
The prize of happineſs muſt ſtill be won:
And oft the woman finds it to her coſt,
The Lover in the Huſband may be loſt.
The Graces only may the heart allure;
They, and the Virtues meeting muſt ſecure.

Alas! I am ſorry to ſay, this is not the caſe with poor Sir William and Lady Rayner. I formerly obſerved to you, that I thought ſufficient time had not been taken to examine whether the Lady's heart was really engaged. She was much perſuaded by her friends to comply; which, joined perhaps to ſome ſecret ſuggeſtions of vanity, made it impoſſible for her to reſiſt their united

united influence. I will not enter into the particulars of the difference betwixt the above-mentioned couple; but I believe, Lady Rayner, merely from a flow of ſpirits and an habitual vivacity, excites uneaſineſs in her huſband, without the leaſt intention. I am perſuaded ſhe does not mean to do it; ſhe has too much good-nature to pain any one: but, being ſo unuſed to controul from the moſt indulgent of parents, ſhe finds it very hard to ſubmit in thoſe trivial matters, that daily occur, and in which moſt huſbands think they have a right to expect ſubmiſſion. To tell you the real ſentiments of my heart, this example has quite frightened me. No man in the world, before marriage, could behave with more reſpect, attention and aſſiduity than did Sir William: Every thing his Charlotte ſaid was right; every action ſeemed to inſpire him with new ardour, and he appeared almoſt to adore her. But now,—how different! His attention and aſſiduity are dwindled down to common civility; and he can ſtay whole days from his once beloved miſtreſs, with perfect indifference. This behaviour hurts Lady Rayner exceedingly; but as her diſpoſition is naturally

inclined to gaiety, ſhe likewiſe ſeeks amuſements abroad, to prevent, as ſhe ſays, her reflecting on the coolneſs of her huſband. Sir William, in company is reckoned the moſt pleaſing man imaginable; but at home, all lifeleſs and inattentive. Lady Rayner reſents this indifference, which, ſo far from making him better, produces only ſullen looks or contemptuous words. I wiſh ſhe would appear not to take notice of this change in his temper; for that man muſt be a brute indeed, who will not endeavour to pleaſe a woman that is ever ready to receive him with chearfulneſs and ſerenity. This is certainly a hard taſk: it is a reſtraint very difficult to practiſe. But from ſuch a conduct it is ſurely more reaſonable to expect ſucceſs, than from cool remonſtrances or complaints; the tears of petulance, or the affectation of gaiety.

How happy ſhall I be, when the time arrives, to ſee you! Believe me, the diverſions of the town, company, or any of the gay ſcenes around me, I regard with the greateſt indifference, in compariſon of the pleaſure I ſhall receive by ſpending a month with you. The little ſchemes of rural amuſement which my imagination has formed,

formed, as far exceed this continual hurry I live in, as does your converſation ſurpaſs that of the generality of women. My next letter will probably fix the day, when I ſhall aſſure you in perſon how very ſincerely I am, and ever will be,

Your affectionate friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

FREDERICK DARNTON, Eſq. to THOMAS SEFTON, Eſq.

London.

Dear TOM,

I HAD ſome time ago ſuch a plaguy diſappointment, that I am hardly yet recovered. Diſappointed from the caprice of a perverſe beauty! There is a very pretty girl come to reſide at old Weldon's; he is her guardian; and ſhe is, indeed, a lovely creature! ſo lovely, that I even determined to pay my addreſſes to her; and not the leaſt doubting of ſucceſs, I purſued my intention; but, would you believe it? ſhe refuſed me! abſolutely refuſed me!—I am ſo provoked with her, that ſhe ſhall certainly feel my reſentment. Heavens! to be rejected! I cannot bear the thought. You muſt know I had but juſt taken a reſolution to marry;

for I never had any very enchanting ideas of wedlock: but this pretty country girl is ſo bewitching a creature, that as I deſpaired of gaining her on eaſier terms, I was reſolved to take her for better or worſe. Beſides ſhe appeared ſo tractable and ſo gentle, that I thought I could manage her as I pleaſed; and, as ſhe ſeems to prefer a rural life, after the firſt winter you know ſhe might have reſided quite ſnug at my country ſeat. All theſe ſchemes I had formed; but, to my great aſtoniſhment, ſhe has flatly rejected my addreſſes. I have been confoundedly miſtaken in my opinion of this Lady: In her whole behaviour to me, ſo much dignity, firmneſs, and modeſty appeared, that, bold as I am, ſhe almoſt bewildered me; and I'm ſure, I muſt often have looked like a fool. But I will be revenged. A ſcheme is laid, and I only wait for a proper opportunity to put it in execution. O Tom! ſhe is lovely beyond deſcription. I have liked many women, but never loved any one ſo well as I do this provoking fair one. Adieu! You ſhall hear ſoon what ſucceſs I am like to meet with. Till then, believe me your's, &c.

FREDERICK DARNTON.

HENRY

HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq; to the Rev. GEO. HAMMOND.

London.

I THANK you moſt ſincerely, dear George, for the agreeable news your laſt letter contained. I love Mrs. Maynard for the character ſhe gives of my Harriett, but no one can do her juſtice; and lovely as is her perſon, the many amiable qualities of her mind even outſhine the former. We are to go to the Pantheon to-morrow; Mrs. Weldon, Miſs Sophia, Miſs Spenlove, Miſs Marſham, and ſeveral gentlemen form the party. My father has ſeen Miſs Melville, and greatly approves my choice. O may ſhe herſelf prove favourable to my wiſhes! but I cannot long be kept in ſuſpenſe; a few days ſhall determine the colouring of my happineſs.

You ſay ſhe has a Brother; I have ſeen him ſeveral times; and in perſon he much reſembles his ſiſter. I wiſh his mind did likewiſe, but their diſpoſitions are very different: The one pays her adorations to virtue, the other is devoted to every kind of diſſipation.

Our party to-morrow evening will I hope be agreeable. If Miſs Maſham were abſent, I ſhould be as well pleaſed; for ſhe really ſets herſelf off ſo oddly, that had I vanity enough to believe it, I might think ſhe regarded me with a partial attention. The ladies rally me on the ſubject, and tell me what a conqueſt I have made. Even my beloved herſelf joins in confuſing me; but ſoon ſhe ſhall know the real ſentiments of

Your affectionate friend,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to C. MELVILLE, Eſq.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

ALTHOUGH I frequently ſee you, my dear brother, I cannot help giving you my ſentiments on paper, as more eligible in my preſent ſtate of mind: You will perhaps gueſs the ſubject—and may what I am about to urge ſink deep into your heart! May you regard the advice of one, who, however deficient in herſelf, cannot help reminding an only brother of the improprieties of his conduct. Yes, Charles, I own I am ſhocked at your recent *exploits*, as you have ſometimes preſumed to call them:

them: It may be termed by the faſhionable world a youthful frolic, and ſuch actions may appear to you in a very trivial light: But ſurely, to rob a defenceleſs young woman of her innocence, upon the falſeſt pretences; to take her from a virtuous courſe of life, and plunge her at once into infamy, wretchedneſs and ſhame, is ſo wicked a conduct, as no excuſe can be framed to extenuate. Conſider only one moment, my dear Charles, and you muſt deſpiſe yourſelf, for ſuffering youthful paſſions to triumph over every ſentiment of virtue and benevolence. In the late affair, what miſery have you occaſioned! What pain have you given to a mind ſuſceptible of every good principle! You have deſtroyed, I fear, for ever deſtroyed, the peace of three honeſt induſtrious perſons;—for I muſt acquaint you that poor Charlotte Parker was juſt going to be led to the altar by a young man, who had ſpared no pains to engage her eſteem. He having heard of the ſuppoſed guilt of his Charlotte, has left his friends, and is gone to ſea, where, perhaps, he may be ere long conſigned to a watry grave, inſtead of receiving a virtuous wife, who would have rendered him happy.

happy. The aunt of this unfortunate young girl, though not ſenſible of the innocence of her niece—as I judge from the reproaches ſhe has written her—muſt, nevertheleſs, be very unhappy. And laſtly, language is inadequate to deſcribe what the immediate object herſelf has ſuffered: yet, ſevere as her ſufferings have been, they would but have juſt commenced, had not Providence conducted her to friends, who have given all the alleviation to her diſtreſs in their power. Before you ſaw her, the innocence and placid virtue of her mind were unſullied; the envious tongue of ſlander was awed to ſilence by the blameleſs ſimplicity of her conduct. Alas! How widely different now! Every friend ſhe had condemns her: Every aſperſion is thrown on her character that malice, and the buſy voice of ſcandal can invent. But perhaps you will think all this is very immaterial. The deſtruction of the virtue of a poor country girl is not of the leaſt conſequence! It may not, ſir, in *your* ideas of right and wrong; and, doubtleſs, your opinion will be applauded by every libertine of the age. But let me aſk you, or any of theſe all-ſufficient gentlemen, whether if a friend of theirs

ſhould dare to inſult the virtue, or even to vilify the character of a ſiſter or relation of theirs, would they not think themſelves bound to reſent the attack, and to chaſtiſe the inſolence of the offender? Nay, it is a certain rule: though the libertine will ſpare no pains to deſtroy the innocence of a ſtranger, he cannot bear the leaſt imputation of ſcandal to hurt the character of thoſe who have *the honour* to belong to *him:* thus (to ſpeak ironically) thus it is, that he practiſes the unerring rule of *doing as he would be done by!*—Surely, Charles, it is—your own heart muſt tell you it is—baſe and ungenerous to take the advantage of the defenceleſs; for it is infringing on the laws of common humanity: But can you think that poverty exempts the mind from ſenſibility? No! ſurely no! Common charity commands us to aſſiſt thoſe who are placed in a lower ſtation; and not to let the accidental acquirements of fortune incite us to triumph over modeſt merit, or to diſregard the prayers and intreaties of helpleſs innocence. To what a miſerable condition are young and inexperienced women reduced, when expoſed to the artful ſnares which your ſex

too

too frequently lay for them! and if they fall,—if they once deviate from the paths of rectitude, how ſeldom do they regain the road to virtue! Without friends, without fortune, without innocence, to protect them, where muſt they ſeek for refuge? O Charles, if none of theſe conſiderations affect you, let another awful reflection intimidate your conſcience: Conſider, that though you are not called upon *here* to give a ſtrict account of your actions, yet certainly *hereafter* there will be a ſcrutiny demanded. Would you but accuſtom yourſelf to theſe reflections, I am perſuaded your good ſenſe muſt naturally ſuggeſt to you the folly and wickedneſs of your conduct. Yes, brother, I will ſay the *wickedneſs*, for, however faſhionable extravagance and diſſipation may be deemed in this polite age, be aſſured they will at laſt prove but miſerable comforters. I know you believe there is a God. You cannot be weak enough to imagine that the world is governed by chance; nor, in truth, did I ever hear of your joining in converſation where profaneneſs and irreligious diſcourſe were introduced. As, therefore, you believe there is a God who ſeeth all things, think, how muſt your conduct appear!

appear! You, that are ſo peculiarly bleſſed with affluence, and various other natural and acquired endowments, which might render you a ſhining figure in the world. Perſons in an exalted ſphere ought to be very circumſpect how they act. Thoſe in humbler ſtations naturally look up to their ſuperiors for an example; and when they once find virtue totally diſcarded in higher life, what wonder is it if the poor and illiterate fancy this a ſanction for their vices? With ſuch a fortune as you poſſeſs, what a power have you to do and to be good! O Charles, let a noble emulation fire your ſoul, and experience will quickly ſhew the happineſs which univerſal benevolence produces. You ought to be *my* counſellor, my friend, my protector! Amidſt all your errors, I love you with a true ſiſterly affection, or I ſhould not have written my mind ſo freely. Be not offended at my frankneſs; your happineſs is my only aim; But happy you never can be, whilſt you continue in your preſent courſe of life. May you quickly reform! May God Almighty alarm and enlighten your benighted mind! May you no longer ſacrifice your fortune and character at the glit-

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tering ſhrine of diſſipation, but ſoon become a proſelyte to virtue and humanity, are the daily and earneſt prayers of,

Your truly affectionate ſiſter,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

To Miſs MELVILLE, in anſwer.

Dear HARRIETT,

I Received your long epiſtle this morning; I frankly own ſome paſſages affect me, but I cannot help thinking you have copied out a ſermon. Reform! Repent! and a deal of ſuch ſtuff! why, to be ſure, ſo I ſhall by and by; it is time enough yet: I am young. Youth is the ſeaſon for pleaſure, and if I indulge a little now, it is very excuſable. So pray, my dear ſiſter, do not puzzle yourſelf in writing ſuch long letters. I love to hear ſomething more lively than the diſtreſs you have painted; but, however, ſince it is ſo, I incloſe a twenty pounds bank note for the little ſimpleton, Charlotte Parker.

On reflection, do continue to write to me; your advice may be of uſe ſome time

or

or other. I love you, Harriett, notwithſtanding the romantick notions you have imbibed.' Adieu, my ſentimental ſiſter, and be aſſured I am your friend, and

Affectionate brother,

CHARLES MELVILLE.

HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq. to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

St. James's-ſquare.

AT length, my friend, the ſecret is out, and the loveliеſt of women is acquainted with the ſituation of my heart. The morning after we went to the Pantheon, you may ſuppoſe I called in Albemarle-ſtreet, to enquire after the health of the family: to my great ſatisfaction, they were all out but Miſs Melville, who was ſlightly indiſpoſed; indeed ſhe had complained of not being well the preceding evening. I found her alone in the drawing-room; and after the uſual ſalutations of the morning, I frankly owned my paſſion: I told her, in the tendereſt terms, what an impreſſion her mental qualifications and the lovelineſs of her perſon had made upon my heart, and

and intreated her to favour the addreſſes of one entirely devoted to her ſervice. "From the firſt moment I beheld you, madam, my heart was captivated by your beauty, and your converſation ever ſince has but the more forcibly rivetted my pleaſing chains. Let me then embrace this happy opportunity of telling you how much I adore you." She appeared in the ſweeteſt confuſion imaginable; a mantling bluſh overſpread her lovely countenance; and, taking the advantage of her ſilence, I purſued the ſubject. "The happineſs of my life depends upon a favourable anſwer, and my future conduct ſhall evince to you the ſincerity of my paſſion; be then, dear madam, propitious to my wiſhes, and exert the power you ſo eminently poſſeſs of making others happy." By this time ſhe was a little recovered, and with that pleaſing manner peculiar to herſelf, thanked me for my good opinion. "Indeed, ſir, ſaid ſhe, the ſuddenneſs of your declaration ſurprized me exceedingly; and the confuſion I am thrown into may prevent me from anſwering you as I ought: but as there is a generous ſincerity in your behaviour, I think you are entitled to the ſame unreſervedneſs; and therefore be

be aſſured, I ſhould entirely decline your addreſſes, if I thought I could not receive them with ſatisfaction; but as I am not the only perſon to be conſulted in this important affair, I intreat your ſilence upon the ſubject, till you have ſpoken to Mr. Weldon." Believe me, George, I was tranſported beyond meaſure. I kiſſed the angelic fair one's hand, in an extaſy not to be deſcribed; but as I was afraid of offending her by renewing the ſubject, our diſcourſe turned on other topics. Some ladies coming in, I took my leave with a heart filled with thoſe pleaſing ſenſations, which they only who love like me can feel. You may ſuppoſe I immediately told Mr. Weldon the ſituation of my heart, and begged his recommendation of me to his amiable ward: he aſſured me, in the politeſt terms, that ſuch a connection would be entirely agreeable to him; but that he would never preſume to influence Miſs Melville, whoſe natural good ſenſe and prudence were ſufficient to direct her in this affair: "but if, added he, the young lady approves, my conſent, you may be aſſured, ſhall not be wanting." I thanked him ſincerely, and related what had paſſed betwixt me and his

ward,

ward, upon which he gave me joy, and ſaid, "You will certainly gain her, for I do aſſure you Harriett would never give the leaſt encouragement to any one whom ſhe does not mean to favour." Thus you ſee, George, every thing turns out as I could wiſh, and I hope ere long to be the happieſt of men.

Two o'clock.

My ſervant juſt brought me the following note, written by a lady, as I ſee by the ſuperſcription. If my curioſity was excited by the outſide, judge how my aſtoniſhment redoubled on reading it through:

SIR,

HOW ſhall I deſcribe the feelings of my heart at this moment, when I have taken my pen in hand to tell you my real ſentiments! O how ſhall I write the word —I love you? Can I tell the thouſand diſtreſſes of my mind before this trembling hand could obey the dictates of my wavering heart? After this declaration, is it neceſſary to add my name? Surely, many incidents muſt have diſcovered the ſecret; I attributed your ſilence to ſome other cauſe, not to the want of eſteem for me.

If

If you will be pleaſed to write a line, and ſend it by the bearer, telling me the genuine ſentiments of your heart, you ſhall know the name of her who hath written this billet."

Gueſs my ſurprize on reading the above. I immediately ſuſpected the author; "it can be no other than Miſs Maſham, thought I; yet how ſhall I anſwer it without ſhocking her? I cannot pretend to what I do not feel; neither can I ſend the man away without an anſwer." Thus I reaſoned with myſelf; and am ſure ſhe could not have felt more when ſhe penned her note, than I did at that inſtant. However, I ſat down to my table, and wrote as follows:

MADAM,

BELIEVE me I am greatly obliged to you for the favourable opinion you are pleaſed to entertain of me, and wiſh it were in my power ſuitably to acknowledge it; but I frankly confeſs, I had rather remain ignorant of the name of my fair correſpondent, as my affections are really pre-engaged; and it is impoſſible for me to return your eſteem with equal ſincerity. To merit the approbation of an amiable woman is an honour.

honour. To deceive her, by not avowing my real ſentiments, would be acting in a manner entirely oppoſite to the diſpoſition of, madam, your moſt obliged humble ſervant,

HENRY CLARENDON.

I ſent the man away immediately with the above. Indeed, I never before was ſo much puzzled: my heart diſdained the leaſt artifice, and yet I could not wiſh to offend the writer. In about half an hour I received the following:

"SIR,

"HOW much do I deſpiſe myſelf for what I have written! How aukward are your excuſes! Truly, your ſincerity is admirable! I might have wiſhed it were not ſo much blended with inſenſibility: But one conſolation is left me, that you are unacquainted with my name. Know, ſir, my eſteem for you is now converted into hatred and revenge; and be aſſured, therefore, you may expect all the reſentment that can animate the boſom of

An offended Woman."

Well, George, what think you of my fair *Incognita?* I muſt pretend to be ignorant who

who ſhe is; I wiſh I had never ſeen her, and were I in a laughing humour, could be a little merry at her expence; but at preſent I really pity her. When a woman breaks through the decorum and delicacy of her ſex, what may ſhe not be capable of doing! But enough of this unpleaſing ſubject. I am as happy as I can wiſh; and believe me to be, my dear George, your's ſincerely,

HENRY CLARENDON.

MRS. MAYNARD to MISS MELVILLE.

I AM very glad, my dear Harriett, to hear of the recovery of poor Charlotte; I am charmed with the girl, and have hit upon a plan, which I think will pleaſe you. My maid is going away; and if you imagine it may be agreeable to Charlotte to take her place, I need not aſſure you that ſhe ſhall be treated with all the tenderneſs ſhe deſerves; nothing ſhall be wanting on my part to render her new habitation comfortable.

Our gueſt is not yet gone; he is a moſt agreeable entertaining man, and ſpeaks ſo highly of Mr. Clarendon, that my curioſity almoſt prompts me to take a journey to

London to ſee him. "No, Harriett; I would not have you aſk the queſtion:" but, if I am not miſtaken, he has already aſked you; and I hope you were not ſuch a ſimpleton as to refuſe him. You ſay, your heart is yet your own; I wiſh you may ſoon loſe it. I ſhall not conſider any thing about your preſent ſituation, your happineſs, and all that; we will talk about it when I ſee you here. Let your next letter therefore fix the day for your viſit, to a truly

Affectionate friend,

MARIA MAYNARD.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

PERMIT me, my dear friend, to thank you for your very obliging offer; but I cannot mention it to Charlotte yet: her ſpirits are too weak to bear the leaſt agitation, and I hope ſoon to make her circumſtances eaſy enough to prevent her being obliged to go to ſervice: Not but that I am ſure ſhe would be treated by you with all poſſible kindneſs; yet I think the treatment ſhe has received from one

part

part of the family, entitles her to the higheſt indulgence from the other.

Ah, my dear! there is no occaſion for me to aſk the queſtion. I little knew my own heart, and muſt never truſt it again. I thought myſelf ſo ſecure from any attachment, as to render me perfectly indifferent; but I have been miſtaken. Spare me, I beſeech you; do not railly me unmercifully on the ſubject. Yes, Maria, Mr. Clarendon has declared himſelf, nor was I armed in proof againſt his manifold accompliſhments. I had thought only of a friendſhip for him; but now I find, friendſhip is but another word for eſteem. He has ſpoken to Mr. Weldon. Mrs. Weldon and Sophia congratulate me on the flattering proſpect in view. I have ſeen Sir James Clarendon; he appears a truly worthy man; benevolence and virtue are written in his countenance, and I cannot look at him without the higheſt veneration. From all theſe circumſtances you may imagine there is nothing to be done but to buy the ring, and go to church;—but you are miſtaken. I have ſeveral affairs upon my mind to finiſh, before this important change can take place. I have had letters

from my uncle Melville, who will arrive in England ſoon; and I am reſolved not to alter my name till he comes. I called laſt week at Mrs. Lalum's, and am charmed with this Lady every time I ſee her. She truly performs the duties of a wife and mother. I found her in the nurſery, attending a ſweet little boy, who had got the ſmall-pox; the little infant was ſitting upon her lap, and the tender mother endeavouring to divert her darling. He has it very favourably; but the anxious parent watches every ſymptom, and attends her little charge with unremitting ſolicitude. Whilſt I ſtaid, Mrs. Odley came, and tried every method to induce Mrs. Lalum to accompany her to a rout. She uſed all her rhetorick, to no purpoſe; in vain ſhe urged the inutility of a mother's attendance at home, when the children were a bed; in vain ſhe told her, that a ſervant could take ſufficient care of ſuch little brats. The fond mother continued inflexible, and anſwered her in the language which maternal love only can dictate. Mrs. Odley, finding ſhe could not prevail, took her leave, and I eaſily ſaw by her manner how ſhe pitied the ſtupidity of my amiable friend, becauſe

ſhe preferred an attendance on her children, to the partaking of thoſe amuſements in which Mrs. Odley delighted. I was gently chid at coming home, for venturing in the room near ſo contagious a diſorder, as my friends were not certain whether I ever had it; but I am not afraid, having frequently been in the midſt of the ſmall-pox, and dare ſay, I ſhall never catch it. My brother had this diſorder when very young, and it is therefore moſt likely I have. I lately wrote to him, and received ſuch an anſwer as I expected; he encloſed a twenty pounds bank note for Charlotte, as if he thought this trifle could compenſate for the wrongs ſhe has ſuſtained. I have talked to him pointedly, and returned him the money, aſſuring him I ſhould always take care of the unfortunate girl. I intreated and conjured him to reflect ſeriouſly, and not be thus led away by his paſſions. I acquainted him with Mr. Clarendon's propoſals; and at length brought him to talk more rationally than uſual. Sophia feigns great indifference on his account; but it is evident ſhe ſtill loves him. Sir William and Lady Rayner go on as uſual. Would they were happy! I love Lady Rayner exceedingly;

though ſhe is a little provoking now and then. Next week you will ſee me; on Thurſday I ſhall leave London, and embrace my beloved Maria. Adieu, my dear friend! your's faithfully,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

The Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND, to HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq.

I Left Devonſhire a day or two ſince, quite charmed with the agreeable couple there. Let me now give you joy on your ſucceſs with the lovely Harriett. I am delighted with her frankneſs. Equally free from coquetry and prudery, ſhe treats her lover as a rational being, not as a ſlave devoted to her will, and labouring under the weight of her chains.

It is whimſical enough to receive advances from a Lady; but, are you ſure her name is Maſham?—One ſhould be very cautious of forming a judgment upon theſe delicate matters: I confeſs it would have been extremely puzzling to me to have anſwered ſo ſingular a billet. I wiſh you may hear no more of her; and yet, however ſhe may pretend to diſlike you now,

now, that paſſion can hardly be ſo ſoon extinguiſhed, which was violent enough to make her thus "o'erſtep the bounds of modeſty." Let me again congratulate you on the happy proſpects before you. May you ſoon be united to the lovelieſt of women, and enjoy all the felicity which can flow from virtue, prays, your affectionate friend,

GEORGE HAMMOND.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

THE aſſiduity of the beſt of men increaſes every day. Yes, Maria, I ſay the beſt of men: you ſee how my ſtile is changed, but I have had ſuch proofs of the goodneſs of his heart, that my opinion of him is raiſed very high. Yet, notwithſtanding the proſperity that awaits me, I do not feel myſelf well, conſequently not happy. I am, however, determined to leave London next Thurſday; perhaps, the change of air at this delightful ſeaſon may relieve me. In vain I ſtrive to be gay; I cannot keep up my uſual ſprightlineſs: yet, if any thing could make me happy, it is the proſpect I have before me. All my friends

congratulate me, except Miſs Maſham. This Lady ſeems to envy me, and is indeed greatly changed in her behaviour. She was always affected, but now her affectation is joined with ill-nature; and ſhe is continually hinting ſomething againſt Mr. Clarendon. To tell you the truth, I believe ſhe regards him with partiality; and, becauſe he is blind to her little arts, ſhe looks upon me as the perſon that prevents his attentions to her. Indeed, I pity her, if this be the caſe, for, to do her juſtice, till lately, ſhe has behaved to me with great civility.

I do not know whether I ſhall be able to ſpend a month with you; but ſo long as I poſſibly can, you may depend upon having the company of Your affectionate,

H. MELVILLE.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

AM I not, Harriett, a true propheteſs? Did I not find you out? But,—no indeed! your heart was entirely free! You did not wiſh to form any ſerious attachment! Ah, my friend! you deceived yourſelf: but I

rejoice to ſee you ſo ſoon acknowledge your error. I cannot help laughing at Miſs Maſham's folly; ſhe is angry, truly, becauſe the charms my Harriett poſſeſſes are ſuperior to her own! O what a proud indulgence, were I but in your place! She would ſoon feel her inferiority, I aſſure you. The ill-natured puſs! to ſpeak againſt Mr. Clarendon;—but never mind her, ſhe will be her own puniſher. You ſay, my dear, that marriage is a lottery, and that I have drawn a prize. Yes, a prize indeed! Why, do you know, my arbitrary wretch would not let me walk three miles this morning? he pretended the fatigue might be too great for my preſent condition; and added ſuch perſuaſive language to prevent me, that I was obliged to yield the point: So you ſee I have not my will in every thing. I only tell you this, to ſhew what a prize I have drawn; and I am at preſent ſo angry with you, that ſincerely I wiſh you may find ſuch another. But indeed, Harriett, I am angry at your imprudence in going to a houſe where the ſmall-pox was: as you were not certain that you ever had it, why ſhould you run the leaſt riſk? Though I write in ſpirits, you make me very uneaſy

to hear of your complaints. Haſten, my beloved friend, to our little habitation, and let my converſation cure you; though indeed I believe it is rather a mental diſorder, occaſioned by thoſe pleaſing anxieties which ſenſible minds muſt feel in your ſituation. Haſten, therefore, and ſoon, to the embraces of

Your ever affectionate friend,

M. MAYNARD.

Miſs WELDON to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

Dear Madam,

IT is with the greateſt concern I acquaint you that Miſs Melville is taken with the Small-pox: it appears a favourable ſort, and I do not think her face will be full. I hardly ever ſtir from her room, but have ſnatched this opportunity of relating what I am ſure will give you pain. O Madam! how ſhall I deſcribe the behaviour of our Harriett? She ſoon diſcovered the real diſorder, though we attempted at firſt to deceive her: ſhe talks ſo ſenſibly that I liſten with aſtoniſhment. The eruption appeared the day after

after ſhe wrote to you; and ſhe was then far from being well, but we all attributed it to her hurry of ſpirits. You, Madam, are ſufficiently acquainted with the excellence of this amiable young lady: her preſent behaviour is moſt truly heroick. We hope her lovely face will not ſuffer; ſhe appears entirely eaſy and reſigned; not a ſingle murmur; but the ſame ſweet diſpoſition which ever diſtinguiſhed her character, now ſhines forth in every word and action. Were I to enumerate her perfections, I ſhould write a volume. I can only ſay, ſhe is amiable beyond deſcription. A young lady, in the bloom of beauty, to be attacked by this cruel diſorder (eſpecially when ſhe thought herſelf ſecure) and to know that ſhe may be deprived of her external charms, is a circumſtance that would be inſupportable to the generality of our ſex: but my dear friend behaves with ſuch perfect compoſure, that her reſignation is exemplary indeed. Let me not forget to mention the worthy Mr. Clarendon. He ſhews ſo much attention, aſſiduity, and tender anxiety, that if there wanted proofs of the ſincerity of his paſſion, this trial would be entirely convincing. It is like-

wiſe ſingular to obſerve the different behaviour of my Harriett's companions. Some ſeem to exult, others to pity; and all, but two or three, to have a viſible ſatisfaction in the affair. Mrs. Lalum's child is perfectly recovered, and the uneaſineſs of this lady, on account of Miſs Melville, ſhews her real and unaffected concern. Excuſe me, dear madam, for writing thus freely. I am too well acquainted with your character to ſuppoſe you will be offended: indeed, I greatly eſteem you, and it would be an unſpeakable pleaſure to be honoured with a letter from ſo amiable a lady. Poor Harriett begs me to aſſure you how much ſhe is mortified at being prevented the pleaſure of ſeeing you, and bids me add, that ſo ſoon as ſhe is recovered, you may depend nothing ſhall detain her from her much loved Maria. Mr. Melville is gone out of town, but my mother has written to him. I know he loves his ſiſter; I wiſh he would imitate her virtues! My dear nurſery will think me long, ſo I conclude. Believe me to be, Madam, your great admirer, and devoted humble ſervant,

SOPHIA WELDON.

Mrs.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs WELDON.

THE goodneſs of your heart is very pleaſingly manifeſted in the obliging letter I have juſt received: you ſurpriſed me exceedingly by the contents; but I ſincerely hope my invaluable friend will do very well; and it is a good thing to have it over. My impatience to hear of her again cannot be deſcribed, and I am perſuaded that the young lady I now addreſs will not omit any opportunity to relieve my anxious mind. You write ſo free and eaſy, that I am charmed with your ſtile; be aſſured I ſhall ever be happy to cultivate the friendſhip of Miſs Sophia Weldon. I well know the ſweet diſpoſition of my Harriett; this is certainly a trial to herſelf, her friends, and her lovers. The envious, the low minded, and the homely, will undoubtedly rejoice in the hope that her perſon may be brought down to a level with their own. By your account, I do not think it will; but even if it ſhould, her winning manners and graceful deportment, joined with the many virtues that adorn her mind, muſt ſtill riſe ſuperior to all the charms which the

the moſt ſtudied art can invent. We ſhall now really ſee the ſincerity of Mr. Clarendon—whether he be only taken with a beautiful face, or whether he really loves Harriett for her mental perfections. May his behaviour ſtill be uniform! and may my ſweet friend ſoon repay his conſtancy with an unblemiſhed face, as I am ſure ſhe will with an unſpotted mind. Adieu, dear Miſs Sophia, and believe me yours,

M. MAYNARD.

FRED. DARNTON, Eſq; to THOMAS SEFTON, Eſq.

YOU will ſoon ſee me, dear Tom; I ſhall quickly leave this confounded town; it begins to be very diſagreeable. You remember I told you I intended to revenge myſelf for the treatment I received from Miſs Melville. I had planned ſeveral ſchemes: ſometimes I thought of watching her when ſhe went to ſome public place, and ſo take an opportunity of running away with her as ſhe returned home; nay I had actually ſucceeded one night as ſhe left the Pantheon, but for the officious

attention

attention of one of her admirers. His name is Clarendon, a mighty ſober young man; yet, to do him juſtice, he looks like a gentleman: I ſuppoſe he intends to declare himſelf her lover—I had half a mind to ſend him a challenge. All my attempts failed in regard to this girl. I had formed a great ſcheme, which would have been put into execution, but for a confounded accident. I intended to way-lay her narrowly whenever ſhe went out, and ſome how or other to have got into converſation with her, as then I would have learned when ſhe paid her intended viſit to a friend ſhe has in Devonſhire,—for my man, who knows a ſervant in their family, told me ſhe was ſhortly going thither. She moſt likely would have only been attended by her careful friends part of the way, and I could have had a glorious opportunity of carrying her off, and marrying her—if I pleaſed. But faith! the caſe is altered; the lady is down with the Small-pox, and of courſe not now worth ſo much trouble. Egad, I have had a good eſcape in being at firſt rejected, though then it hurt me exceedingly: for, in ſpite of Hymen and the Graces, I ſhould have diſliked her moſt infallibly

infallibly after her loſs of beauty. Let who will now have Miſs Melville, I reſign, and will not contend; ſo, Tom, adieu. I ſhall ſoon be with you, and remain,

Your true friend,

FRED. DARNTON.

HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq; to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

MY laſt letter was written in all the exultation of ſucceſs, on having obtained the approbation of the moſt lovely of women. This brings you an account of her being ſeized by that cruel deſtroyer of beauty—the ſmall-pox; yet, will you believe me? I rather rejoice at the accident, as ſhe is in a fair way of doing well, and, as now I ſhall peculiarly have it in my power to ſhew the amiable Harriett my ſincere regard; regard did I ſay! my love, my adoration; for if her beautiful face were blemiſhed, the attractive qualities of her mind are ſufficient to bind me to her for ever. I paſs my days the while in great anxiety; I am not permitted to ſee her; they ſay ſhe is full, but no danger is apprehended.

hended. I dream of her every night, and am continually going or ſending to the houſe. The concern and attention of her gentle friend Miſs Weldon charms me; but I am equally incenſed at the behaviour of thoſe ladies, who ſo late were her companions,—Miſs Spenlove excepted, and two or three others. I cannot forbear relating a little dialogue betwixt a few of her female viſitants. Yeſterday morning I called in Albemarle ſtreet, and after making all the enquiries that the moſt tender apprehenſions of anxious love could ſuggeſt, I went to Mr. Spenlove's, having a little buſineſs with him. He was dreſſing, and I was ſhewn into his ſtudy, adjoining to the drawing-room. I had not remained there many minutes, before ſome ladies knocked at the door, and were conducted into the drawing-room. The partition is very ſlight betwixt the two apartments, and I heard the following diſcourſe pretty diſtinctly. "What a ſhocking thing it is, Mrs. Spenlove, for poor Miſs Melville to be thus attacked, cried one!" "Ay, ſays another, ſo beautiful as ſhe was!" "But do you think ſhe will be much altered? cried Miſs Maſham, (for I ſoon diſtinguiſhed her voice)

voice) though, for my part, I never thought Miſs Melville handſome; her countenance was too trifling, it wanted animation: to be ſure ſhe had a tolerable complexion; but altogether, I think, ſhe looked childiſh." "Whatever you may think, replied another, I aſſure you the gentlemen all admire her: Was not ſhe going to be married, Mrs. Spenlove?" "Yes, replied the lady, and the preſent temporary illneſs, I fancy, will not prevent it; as I am perſuaded Mr. Clarendon loves her too ſincerely to withdraw his addreſſes, becauſe her features may not altogether be ſo delicate."

"Mr. *Clarendon!* exclaimed Miſs Maſham, is *he* engaged to Miſs Melville?" "Did you not know that? replied Miſs Spenlove,—and I believe a more worthy couple never lived."

"You may ſay what you pleaſe, cried Miſs Maſham; but Mr. Clarendon is a man of too much taſte to marry a fright: he is tolerably agreeable."

"You are miſtaken, madam, replied Miſs Spenlove, if you think my friend will be a fright. I have ſeen her this morning, and am perſuaded the beauty of her countenance will not be the leaſt impaired. But

even

even if it ſhould, ſhe has really ſo many other amiable qualifications, that the loſs of this tranſient endowment can never be miſſed. All who converſe with Miſs Melville one hour, will be amply convinced of the good qualities of her mind; and they are qualities which will improve every day; whilſt a mere pretty face, in ſpite of art or care, muſt be impaired by the much dreaded hand of time."

I did not hear the reply to this ſenſible ſpeech; Mr. Spenlove entered the room, and having diſpatched my buſineſs, I took my leave. I love Miſs Spenlove for her attachment to my Harriett; ſhe is a charming young lady, I aſſure you. You ſee, George, by the above converſation, the diſpoſition of ſome women: They rejoice at the mortification of another; and, under the guiſe of pity, inſult even their companions, I will not ſay Friends. The narrow-minded and the ignorant can never allow beauty, even to their friend; at leaſt if they allow it, the beautiful perſon is regarded with jealouſy, and ſeldom treated ſo cordially as others leſs handſome. How long do I think the time that debars me the company of my heart's firſt and deareſt object! How earneſtly do I wiſh to converſe with her!

her! I think I love her, if poſſible, more than ever. Was you ever in love, George?--If not, you muſt be a ſtranger to all that tender ſolicitude, that inexpreſſible combination of pleaſing anxiety, which animates the breaſt of a faithful and a ſucceſsful lover. But I wander. Whenever Cupid takes aim at your heart, may the object be worthy enough to conduct you to the temple of Hymen! Adieu, and believe me to be, dear George,

Yours faithfully,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs WELDON to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Dear MADAM, Albemarle-ſtreet.

I HAVE the pleaſure to acquaint you that our dear friend is as well as we can expect. She has had a very fine ſort indeed, and I hope ſhe will ſoon be able to write herſelf; not but I am proud of the taſk, yet am ſure you muſt be happy to change your correſpondent. Mr. Clarendon is a conſtant attendant; his care and anxiety for our Harriett charm me. Happy are they, who place their eſteem where

where they need not be aſhamed to own it, for ſurely it is the union of minds alone that can conſtitute permanent happineſs. My mother received an anſwer from Mr. Melville yeſterday: he expreſſes great concern about his ſiſter: I could have wiſhed him the ſmall-pox inſtead; perhaps it might have humbled him—But you know his character, madam. Not a feature of Miſs Melville's will be hurt, and I dare ſay the air of Devonſhire will reſtore her. Yet, pray madam, do not keep my amiable pattern long: ſhe is my guide; and I flatter myſelf I have learned much from her ſince ſhe has been with us. Would you believe it? I am ſelfiſh enough to feel a little regret, when I reflect that I ſhall loſe her ſo ſoon in earneſt. I know I ought to rejoice, but I cannot help it. My dear Harriet's advice has often gently led me right, when my wavering heart ſometimes would have tempted me to deviate from prudence. I do not mean, madam, that I was inclined to any wilful evil, but I have not that ſteadineſs and reſolution which ſo much diſtinguiſh Miſs Melville. Can you forgive me all this prattle? I know you will, becauſe I mention Harriett as my ſanction for troubling you with it. I

really

really am in better ſpirits than uſual—ſo happy at the recovery of our friend! Rejoice with me, dear madam, and believe me to be

Your ſincere admirer, and humble ſervant,

SOPHIA WELDON.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs WELDON.

YOU rejoice me exceedingly, my dear Miſs Sophia, by the account I have received of Harriett's recovery. I cannot promiſe how long I ſhall keep her; but as you muſt loſe her very ſoon, I think you had better accompany your friend. If you can obtain your papa and mamma's conſent, it will give me the ſincereſt pleaſure to ſee you. Try, my dear Miſs Sophia; tell them you will ſoon return: in ſhort, tell them any thing which you think will be moſt ſucceſsful. I long to be acquainted with you, and ſhall ſoon ſee whether you have imitated Harriett, or whether your amiable behaviour be entirely natural to you. Give my kind love to her, and tell her how much I rejoice that ſhe has proved victorious over this ſo much dreaded

enemy

enemy to beauty. O Miſs Weldon! I could write a volume in praiſe of this dear girl. So ſweet a diſpoſition, I believe, was ſeldom met with. Nor is it *my* partial friendſhip alone that makes me think ſo highly of her; the general voice of all her acquaintance equally echoes her praiſe. Void of affectation, ſhe ſeems not to feel her own ſuperiority: Free from the leaſt degree of pride, ſhe treats the meaneſt of mankind with the greateſt affability; and the poor people about her father's ſeat in the country almoſt adored her. I wiſh Charles Melville would not only admire, but copy ſo bright an example. Their diſpoſitions are different; but I ſincerely hope that time will ſhew him his folly. Adieu, my dear Miſs Sophia! make my reſpectful compliments acceptable to your family. With the tendereſt eſteem for my much loved Harriett, I beg leave to ſubſcribe myſelf,

Your affectionate humble ſervant,

MARIA MAYNARD.

Miſs

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

LITTLE did I think, my dear friend, the laſt time I wrote to you, that I ſhould ſo long have been prevented that pleaſure, by the attack of a cruel diſorder! In truth it has humbled me exceedingly,—and all the vanity of my proud heart is, I hope, entirely extinguiſhed. I do not mean that my perſon is much the worſe; but, when I reflect how I might have been altered; how ſuddenly I was taken; nay, that death itſelf might perhaps have been my inevitable portion, and all in ſo ſhort a time; I am thankful to my Maker for yet ſparing me, and at the ſame time ſhould be inexcuſable not to let his mercy have a due effect upon my mind. When I make theſe reflections, Vanity dies within me; and when I take a view of my paſt life, I find that I have been too frequently led away by its fantaſtick influence. What are all the accidental gifts of nature, birth, or fortune, when ſickneſs and caſualty may ſo ſoon level us with the meaneſt of mankind! The fineſt face may be ſpoiled by

the

the rough hand of diſeaſe; our fortune, or friends, may be taken away: and we all know, that in the grave the temporary diſtinctions of birth are diſregarded and forgotten! And yet, how very anxious are mankind in general to obtain theſe fleeting poſſeſſions! So vehement a deſire can only ariſe from a want of due attention to things more important; and thus the mind, which muſt be active, and in purſuit of ſomething, ſeeks ſatisfaction and happineſs in trifling occupations. I hope my late illneſs will teach me a better leſſon, and enable me to form a right eſtimate of all ſublu.ary enjoyments. The attention of my friends has been indeed unremitted: Sophia's aſſiduity was indefatigable beyond deſcription; nor ſhall I ever forget the care, the anxiety, and patience of Charlotte Parker. She ſeemed to have forgotten her own griefs, whenever ſhe could render me the leaſt ſervice. Charles is juſt come to town; he has been with me, and expreſſes great pleaſure at ſeeing me ſo well. Lady Rayner has been frequently here; but I have not had any particular converſation with her. She endeavours to look gay; but I am afraid ſhe is not ſo happy as we could wiſh. Mr.

Clarendon is a conſtant viſitor; I am to ſee him to-morrow. Had I wanted a proof of the goodneſs of his heart, his late anxious attention would have abundantly afforded it. Sophia commiſſions me to acquaint you, that ſhe is quite delighted with your obliging invitation; and ſhe will uſe her utmoſt endeavour to prevail with her mamma to conſent: indeed you are very kind, and I think the journey and the change of place will be of ſervice to her. I wiſh ſhe did not ſo frequently ſee Charles: abſence is the beſt cure for an ill-placed eſteem. She has ſhewn me the letters you wrote to her; they were written like yourſelf: permit me, my ever valued friend, to render you my ſincereſt thanks for all your tender enquiries concerning me. Some day next week, I hope to aſſure you in perſon, how ſincerely I am,

Your affectionate,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

HENRY

HENRY CLARENDON, Eſq; to the Rev. GEO. HAMMOND.

London.

REJOICE with me, my dear George: Miſs Melville is recovered; I have ſeen her, and heard the muſical ſound of her voice:

> Oh! it came o'er my ear, like the ſweet ſouth
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing, and giving odours!

She is not altered; her features are full as lovely as ever, and a few weeks will be ſufficient to reſtore her complexion to its native freſhneſs; the diſorder I ſee has been much ſlighter than I apprehended. A whimſical meeting I had this morning. My chariot juſt ſtopped at Mr. Weldon's door, and who ſhould be going in but Miſs Maſham? I entered the room, and after making all tender enquiries to my Harriet concerning herſelf, I accoſted the Lady with my uſual freedom. She reddened like ſcarlet, and throughout her whole behaviour tacitly confeſſed, that ſhe, and no other, could be the writer of

thoſe ſtrange billets. I ſeemed to take no notice of her confuſion, but turned the converſation to general ſubjects. She ſoon took her leave, and wiſhed me good morning, in a very reſerved manner. Harriett perceived it, and aſked if I did not obſerve a manifeſt alteration in the behaviour of Miſs Maſham? "I believe, added ſhe, this Lady only came from mere curioſity, to ſee if I were altered; and I do not think ſhe looked pleaſed at my appearance." I was juſt upon the point of diſcovering my ſuſpicions of Miſs Maſham; but luckily conſidered the ſubject was delicate, and that I had better conceal them. Beſides, it would have appeared ſo much like vanity, that I am glad I reſtrained myſelf. And yet, if revenge or malice ſhould prompt Miſs Maſham to any violence, it would be better that my Harriett were acquainted with her motives. To her queſtion, therefore, I anſwered, "that I thought ſhe did look a little cool; but there was no accounting for the caprice of ſuch ladies." "Nay, I aſſure you, replied Miſs Melville; ſhe has been particularly civil to me, and congratulated me exceedingly on my recovery; and told me how

how happy ſhe ſhould think herſelf to be ſtiled my friend." Yes, thought I, ſhe means to be quite certain before ſhe proceeds. "But, added Harriett, I never liked her; and politeneſs only is what ſhe muſt expect from me." I rejoiced to hear her ſpeak thus, and our diſcourſe took a different turn; I then, in the language my heart dictated, vowed eternal conſtancy, and uttered every thing tender and perſuaſive to intreat her not to delay making me the happieſt of men. "It is, my dear Miſs Melville, from yourſelf, that the determination is to proceed; Mr. Weldon is ſo well convinced of your prudence, that he is reſolved to leave you to act uninfluenced by any but your own judgment. It would be an affront to your underſtanding, were I to repeat my profeſſions; but, let my conduct ſhew you their ſincerity: for believe me, Miſs Melville, much as I admire your outward form, and exterior accompliſhments, (and I own they firſt attracted me) yet it is the innate goodneſs, virtue, and purity of your mind, that above all theſe engaged me to you with ſo indiſſoluble an attachment." "Sir, replied the lovely Harriett, I admire your

frankneſs; indeed I have deſpaired of ever meeting with ſo much ſincerity: permit me then to follow your example, and tell you, that my eſteem for you is founded on the ſame principles. I own you have made an impreſſion on my heart, and am ſolicitous to avoid the leaſt imputation of coquetry, or prudery; but I have formed a reſolution, which I will ſteadily keep—not to marry before the arrival of my uncle Melville, whom we expect in the autumn." "It is an age," replied I; but after uſing all the arguments that a heart warmed with the pureſt flame could dictate, to induce her to break ſo cruel a reſolve, I was obliged to acquieſce in her determination. O George! ſhe had never before avowed her eſteem; nor ſhall I forget her enchanting manner! She then told me of her intended viſit to Mrs. Maynard, and I almoſt made her promiſe to correſpond with me. Thus you ſee, ſucceſs ſeems to await

Your affectionate friend,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

I Write this, my dear friend, to acquaint you, that I intend myſelf the pleaſure, the long expected pleaſure, of viſiting you this week. I have likewiſe obtained leave for Sophia to accompany me. The dear girl is delighted with the idea; on Thurſday we ſhall ſet out in a poſt-coach and four, and as two ladies cannot poſſibly travel alone, we may perhaps ſurpriſe you at the inn, with the preſence of two gentlemen: when they have ſafely delivered us to your protection, they will return to London. I depend upon your promiſe, that you and Mr. Maynard meet us half way. Poor Sophia did not know how to mention your invitation to her mamma; I undertook it, and this obliging parent, ever willing to give pleaſure to her children, conſented without the leaſt apparent reluctance. Do you know that I half promiſed to correſpond with Mr. Clarendon? I really thought it would be affectation to refuſe, after owning my eſteem for him. Yes, Maria, I have confeſſed it—I will

not be aſhamed of the ſecret impulſe of my heart, which informs me, that I can receive his addreſſes with pleaſure: notwithſtanding, I ſhall adhere to my reſolution of not marrying till the arrival of my uncle Melville. I believe I have frequently ſpoken of Miſs Maſham; ſhe is an unaccountable woman; curioſity led her very early to ſee me. The ſecond viſit ſhe made, Mr. Clarendon entered the room at the ſame time; but never did I ſee ſo much confuſion in any one's countenance, as appeared in that of Miſs Maſham. I was aſtoniſhed, and could not help aſking Mr. Clarendon, when ſhe went, if he obſerved it: he evaded my queſtion; but I did not perceive any alteration in his looks. I was fooliſh enough to be alarmed at the lady's behaviour; and even now, ſuggeſtions will ariſe, not entirely ſatisfactory. She is ſo prodigiouſly civil, it is quite tireſome; ſhe was not always ſo. But if ſhe loves Mr. Clarendon, why ſhould ſhe be civil to me? ſhe would rather I think envy me. But huſh, my heart! why theſe thoughts? why theſe reflections? begone! I will not ſuffer them to intrude on the peace of, your affectionate

H. MELVILLE.

Miſs

Miſs MASHAM to Miſs FREELOVE.

Bury-ſtreet.

LET me, dear Betſy, inform you of my vexation and diſappointment; yes, I will relate to you my trouble, if this throbbing heart can let my pen obey me. I informed you of all my weakneſs; I told you I had even written to the gentleman, confeſſing my paſſion, though I knew it to be againſt the ſtricteſt rules of delicacy and decorum. Indeed, I concealed my name; but a recent meeting with him, I am ſure, muſt have diſcovered my folly. I met him at the houſe of my deteſted rival Miſs Melville; I had hardly patience; I could have almoſt deſtroyed the too lovely girl. I went home, and threw myſelf in an agony not to be deſcribed; love, ſhame, revenge, hatred, envy, alternately preſided in my mind. Miſs Melville is beautiful! O that the ſmall-pox had deſtroyed her beauty! This hope, for a while, had kept me pretty quiet; but when I beheld her charms unimpaired, ſaw Mr. Clarendon take her hand, and addreſs himſelf to her with the moſt bewitching tenderneſs, if my looks could have killed

him, he would have fallen breathleſs at my feet! Shall I be refuſed for this pretty ſimpleton? My fortune is far ſuperior, and I think my perſon not ſo very deſpicable. What can I do? how ſhall I act? I muſt prevent their marriage. If I cannot be happy, my exulting rival ſhall not: yet will I continue to conduct myſelf with great appearance of friendſhip towards this little fool, and the innocent ſimplicity of her heart will aid my purpoſes. She is now gone into the country for ſome time; much miſchief may be done, but how to begin I know not. Why has nature given me ſo uncontroulable a diſpoſition? or rather, why were not my paſſions ſubdued at an age when correction might have availed? But now no one can call me to an account for my conduct. I defy the world's cenſure: ſince I have once conſciouſly broken through cuſtom and delicacy, what ſignifies how I act? I can write no more. Adieu! I am,

Your unhappy friend,

HESTER MASHAM.

Miſs WELDON to Mrs. WELDON.

Parſonage-houſe.

Dear MAMMA,

WE arrived here yeſterday, about eight o'clock in the evening. Imagination can hardly form any thing ſo delightful as this ſituation; but as I fear my deſcription would be very inaccurate on ſo ſlight a view, I ſhall defer it till my return. I really thought I ſhould be extremely happy to accompany Harriet. I am pleaſed; but ſtill the parting from the beſt of mothers is a circumſtance that diſtreſſes me. I never before ventured from your preſence, never left you for two whole days; and I miſs my dear mamma exceedingly. In vain I look for you; in vain I liſten for your footſtep; I am diſappointed: we are many miles aſunder. This may be very fooliſh; but I cannot help it. Harriett encourages her friends to raily me on this amiable weakneſs, as they term it: they aſk me what I ſhould do if I were married? I tell them I never will marry whilſt you live. I now experience I ſhould be miſerable without you. Mrs.

Maynard is a charming lady; and her converſation is ſo lively and entertaining, that one might ſuppoſe ſhe had lived in London all her days. Mr. Maynard almoſt adores her, yet does not diſcover any fondneſs before company; but it is eaſy to be ſeen by his behaviour, how much he loves her. Do, my dear mamma, write to your girl; tell her you love her as much as ever. Pray give my duty to my father, and affectionate love to my ſiſter. I ſuppoſe you do not go to Richmond this week. Harriett will write to Lady Rayner. God bleſs you, my dear, my honoured mamma, and believe me to be your ever dutiful,

And affectionate daughter,

SOPHIA WELDON.

Mrs. WELDON, in anſwer.

Albemarle-ſtreet.

My dear GIRL,

I Have juſt received your agreeable letter, and immediately take up my pen to acknowledge it. You charm me, Sophia, by your innocent manner of writing; yet,

my love, do not indulge thoſe feelings you deſcribe: for, however amiable they may be deemed by friends, they ought not to be encouraged. You are no longer a child; a womanly behaviour is expected from you, and I am perſuaded you will endeavour to attain a little more reſolution. Many circumſtances may happen to oblige us to be frequently ſeparated; I may even be taken from you by a divine command. I know this thought hurts you; but all human exiſtence is very precarious. How then could my child bear the loſs of me, when ſhe is even not happy to part from me a few weeks? Have a little more reſolution, I again repeat. This you only want; for that diſpoſition, which now appears amiable, in time might degenerate into weakneſs and folly. I have obſerved this temper of your mind on ſeveral occaſions, and I do not ſo much point at your late uneaſineſs, as at the general tenour of your actions. Your mind ſeems unſettled and unſteady; you want a certain firmneſs of ſpirit to render you happy: I can eaſily account for your feelings at firſt parting with me. As you obſerve, you never before left me for two days together; but I

hope

hope now you are perfectly eaſy. Why would you not deſcribe the delightful ſituation you are ſo charmed with? Be aſſured, the moſt inaccurate narrative from your pen is infinitely more pleaſing than the moſt elaborate account of any other perſon. I admire Mrs. Maynard extremely; and in the ſhort time I converſed with her, I perceived great good-nature and vivacity in her diſpoſition. You ſee, my dear, how agreeable a chearful temper is; it recommends us to others, and renders us happy in ourſelves. Diſcontent and gloomineſs ought only to be the companions of guilt. Innocence is, or ever ſhould be chearful: it delights to ſee every object on the bright ſide, and ſeldom anticipates trouble by fruitleſs anxiety. I am ſure, my Sophia, it is needleſs to aſſure you, that I love you as well as ever. This ſhort abſence will endear you to me, if poſſible, more and more. Your ſiſter has juſt now been with me; I wiſh I could ſay ſhe was happy. She endeavours to reſume her uſual gaiety, but her countenance too plainly indicates the contrary. I did not aſk any queſtions. May her own prudence guide her right! She ſays, ſhe intends writing to Harriett;

I com-

I commiſſioned her to ſend my kind love; but as I cannot aſſure this amiable young lady too often of my friendſhip, do you tell her how ſincerely I eſteem her. Your father unites with me and Lady Rayner, in every good wiſh for your felicity, and believe me to be, my dear girl,

Your affectionate mother,

H. WELDON.

LADY RAYNER to Miſs MELVILLE.

St. James's-ſquare.

My dear HARRIETT,

FAIN would I be gay, fain would I entertain you by relating incidents which daily happen. If I were not married my letters would be more entertaining; but I have a huſband, and he muſt be the ſubject at preſent. He grows more tireſome every day; he even pretends to be jealous; and, though as innocent as a new born babe, I am continually tormented with his ſuſpicions. You know Sir William is of late very little at home; but the other afternoon, as I expected a great deal of company, I ventured to aſk him to ſtay and take a game of cards: to my aſtoniſhment,

aſtoniſhment, he conſented. Sir Philip Clendon was of the party. This gentleman is fooliſhly attentive to me: I am married, and what ſignifies fine ſpeeches now? But yet, will you believe me? I am not diſpleaſed with flattery. Sir Philip talked a great deal to me, and I feigned to liſten, and to be pleaſed with his nonſenſe. I ſay feigned, for in my heart I deſpiſe him; but I thought it would animate Sir William, nor was I miſtaken. When the company was gone, he ſneeringly hoped I had been well entertained by Sir Philip. I anſwered, "Yes; really, Sir William, he is a very agreeable man; he is lively, gay, and obliging." I will not trouble you, Harriett, with a recital of our converſation, but I plainly perceived he was not pleaſed with my apparent partiality for Sir Philip. The moſt provoking circumſtance is, that this conceited gentleman will fancy I liſtened to him with pleaſure, but I can undeceive him at any time. O Harriett! indeed I am not happy! I endeavour to conceal my uneaſineſs from my mother; and did not her enquiring eyes force a tear into mine, my ſituation ſhould be an inviolable ſecret to her. Sir William is, I believe,

believe, a man of ſenſe; he is gay himſelf, but cannot bear to have his wife partake of thoſe innocent amuſements, which ſurely my ſituation in life authorizes me to enjoy. He is always out of humour when I talk of faſhionable diverſions. I thought how it would be, when I ſo tamely yielded to him about the maſquerade. Does Sir William imagine he married me only to render me a mere domeſtick animal, to ſit at home, work at my needle, and look after the family? If this be his opinion of your Charlotte, he is greatly miſtaken. I muſt have my pleaſures; and if he will not partake of them with me, why—we ſhall e'en live on in the faſhionable manner, by enjoying them ſeparate.

Three o'clock,

I was interrupted by ſome morning viſitors, and whilſt talking with them, the following audacious billet was put into my hand by the ſervant. When the ladies took their leave, I opened the note, and, to my great aſtoniſhment, read what has juſtly excited my indignation.

"Moſt adorable of your ſex!

"The many opportunities I have lately had of converſing with you, and admir-

ing

ing your inimitable perfections, render me the humbleſt of your ſlaves. Who can reſiſt the piercing luſtre of your eyes? O! let them look favourably on me; let them ſhed their benign influence on my wounded heart. I flatter myſelf your ladyſhip has not been altogether inſenſible to the love I have ever aſpired to evince for the moſt beautiful of women. Yes, madam, I adore you; and if my eyes have never before diſcovered the ſecret, let my pen, by what I have written, deſcribe, though faintly, the feelings of my heart. How inſenſible is Sir William to ſuch a multiplicity of charms! How little does he deſerve ſo ineſtimable a treaſure! Be favourable, dear Lady Rayner; ſend only one line to aſſure me I may not abſolutely deſpair of gaining your eſteem. Adieu! moſt exalted of your ſex, and believe me to be, madam, your great admirer,

And wounded lover,

PHILIP CLENDON."

What do you think, my Harriett, of this affronting note? How ſhall I act? What can I do? If I were to acquaint Sir William, I dread the fatal conſequence. If I conceal it, vanity will ſuggeſt to the

confident

confident Sir Philip, that I am not diſpleaſed with his inſolence. Little did I think any man could be ungenerous enough to take advantage of the innocent freedom of my diſpoſition. I will not deign an anſwer; my contempt ſhall be ſhewn by my ſilence. Write to me, dear Harriett! adviſe, I intreat you,

Your perplexed friend,

CHARLOTTE R--NER.

Miſs MELVILLE to LADY RAYNER.

Parſonage-houſe.

INDEED, my beloved friend, you ſtand in need of better advice than it is poſſible for any one ſo young and inexperienced as I am to beſtow. Yet I will adviſe you to the beſt of my power, and I muſt begin with reproving you. You have acted wrong, very wrong; I am perſuaded you are convinced of it, and this it is which raiſes in your mind thoſe conflicts that render you ſo unhappy. You ſay Sir William grows more tireſome every day; and what is the method you take to render him more agreeable? You endeavour to *animate* him, by raiſing ſuſpicions, which muſt

muſt make you both miſerable; what is the conſequence of it? You are affronted by an inſignificant coxcomb, who imagines you entertain a partiality for him, when you really deſpiſe him. It is impoſſible to behold the amiable lady I now addreſs, without being charmed with her beauty and vivacity. How careful then ſhould you be of giving the leaſt encouragement to [illegible] who will take an ungenerous advantage of that openneſs of temper which ſo diſtinguiſhes my Charlotte! Indeed I ſincerely feel for you, nor do I mean by what I have written to reproach you, but to warn you of your danger. The friendſhip I have for you obliges me to proceed, and I had rather riſk affronting you by an undiſſembled ſincerity, than meanly flatter your errors by concealing my real ſentiments. You ſay you are not diſpleaſed with flattery; I believe you; few of our ſex are: but have a care, my dear friend, that this univerſal deſire of admiration does not lead you into an error. I know Sir William loves you, and it is in your own power to make him the moſt obliging of huſbands. There is certainly ſomething in your conduct that diſpleaſes him,

and

and there is a paſſage in your letter, which I fancy may lead me to gueſs the cauſe. You ſay you "will have your pleaſures, and if Sir William is not inclined to partake of them with you, you muſt enjoy them ſeparately." And could this ſentence, Lady Rayner, fall from your pen? I am perſuaded it was written very inadvertently, and, upon mature reflection, you muſt ſee the impropriety of ſuch a conduct. I will not enlarge on the cenſure you would draw upon yourſelf from ſuch a deviation, in the opinion of the world, but only aſk you this queſtion: Can you expect to receive pleaſure on a plan ſo evidently unpropitious? If your heart anſwer in the affirmative, my Charlotte's feelings are very different from my own: for I do think, that I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of beings, were I to live in conſtant diſſipation; eſpecially when I knew it would diſpleaſe the man I was bound to obey. Sir William, I imagine, perceives the ſatisfaction you take in univerſal admiration: it is this makes him uneaſy and fretful. I wiſh you had not given him reaſon to ſuſpect your feigned partiality for Sir Philip. Sir William

liam ſeeing you are ſo much engaged, likewiſe ſeeks for amuſements abroad; thus you each differently purſue happineſs; and my dear friend has confeſſed how fruitleſs, hitherto, her ſearch has been. Indeed I hardly know how to adviſe you to proceed with regard to Sir Philip Clendon: he is ſo confident and artful an incendiary, that great circumſpection is neceſſary. If it were my own caſe, I would treat him with cool civility, but not take the leaſt notice of his inſidious note. To all his fine ſpeeches I would never appear to attend, but inſtantly begin another ſubject, or anſwer him quite contrary to what he expects. This, I dare ſay, in a ſhort time, will entirely cure him; he muſt then ſee that you deſpiſe him, and do not think him worthy of an explanation: His vanity will be hurt, and he moſt likely will ſeek ſome other object to exerciſe his gallantry. But after all I have written, you, my dear Charlotte, muſt be the beſt judge in what manner to act. Do, I conjure you, call prudence to your aid, and may the excellent underſtanding which you poſſeſs guide you to the beſt deciſion! happy, ſo timely

to have diſcovered the improprieties reſulting from levity and indiſcretion!

Sophia is very well. Mrs. Maynard admires her exceedingly; and this air has already reſtored her complexion almoſt to its native freſhneſs.

Have you ſeen Mr. Clarendon lately? Surely he is rather forgetful. After his profeſſions, it would be natural to imagine he might have ſeized an occaſion of writing a few lines. Much as I eſteem him, I cannot bear to be neglected; but, perhaps, thinking himſelf ſure of my regard, he is therefore ſparing of farther trouble to deſerve it. The idea is unpleaſant, but, if well founded, he will find himſelf miſtaken.

Sophia has written to her mother, and the dear girl is now delighted in peruſing the anſwer of this obliging parent: ſhe was in ſuch a hurry to open the letter, that ſhe tore it almoſt in halves. Tell my dear Mrs. Weldon this; it will ſhew her with what joy Sophia receives her favours. It is not in my power to deſcribe the beautiful ſituation of this rural retreat: the proſpects on every ſide delight the eye, and the elegant convenience of the houſe

charms

charms me. Mr. Maynard is greatly beloved by his parishioners, and visited by all the neighbouring gentry.

Write, my dear friend; tell me if you have any news of my brother. I am always in fear for him; his volatile disposition too frequently leads him into the wrong path. Commend me to my good Charlotte Parker; bid her keep up her spirits, and assure her of my unabated regard. Adieu, dear Lady Rayner; act prudently, and excuse the freedom of,

Your

H. MELVILLE.

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Sir H. CLARENDON to Miss MELVILLE.

Windsor.

Dearest MADAM,

IT is impossible to express the thousand anxieties of mind since I last parted from the loveliest of women. What must you think of me—to be absent a whole week, and not take up my pen to enquire after you! Yet, when I relate the cause that has hindered me, your sympathizing heart will, I am certain, pity my distress. O madam!

madam! How ſhall I repeat it? My father is no more! Judge of the conflicts I have ſuſtained. Never ſon loved a father with truer affection; never did parent more deſerve every attention that filial piety could beſtow. The very evening I returned to London I received a letter from Windſor, acquainting me that my father was taken ſuddenly ill, and intreated my immediate attendance. I ſet out directly, and arrived about ten o'clock that evening. I found a very dear friend with him, whoſe name is Hammond; I believe I have ſpoken of him to you. He came to town the day before, and finding Sir James at Windſor, he repaired there very opportunely to act the part of an affectionate friend. I ſaw that this beloved parent was dangerouſly ill; the alarming ſymptoms he frequently had, beſpoke a ſpeedy diſſolution. I will not ſadden your amiable heart, by attempting to deſcribe my feelings on this dreadful occaſion; nor, indeed, can I relate the ſad ſcene that paſſed. My friend and I ſat up all night, endeavouring, in vain, by our ineffectual aſſiſtance, to prolong the life of a perſon whom Heaven had deſtined for its own.

Yes, my dear Miſs Melville, the next morning was the laſt my poor father breathed: about half an hour before the awful moment came, that called him to an heavenly tribunal, he ſpoke to me as follows: "My dear Henry, you ſee the inſtability of all human felicity: a few weeks ago health ſeemed to glow on my cheek, and, conſidering my years, no one had greater reaſon to expect a continuance of it: but Heaven hath ordered otherwiſe. I am going, where every mortal, ſooner or later, muſt follow. O my ſon, keep in the path of virtue; let religion ever be your guide; truſt not in your own ſtrength, nor in any ſublunary enjoyment: a well-ſpent life alone can ſupport you, when you ſhall be reduced to my ſituation. Fly from the deceitful ſnares of vice, and ſtill continue in that courſe you have ever yet purſued. May you be happy! and to render you completely ſo, endeavour ſoon to obtain the heart and hand of Miſs Melville. Her virtues will keep you ſteadily fixed in every good reſolution; and be aſſured, had I been permitted to have remained here, the accompliſhment of this union would have rendered me happy."

Much

Much more my dear father was ſpeaking in your praiſe, when, being quite exhauſted, he fainted away. O, my dear Miſs Melville! why ſhould I pain your heart by deſcribing what were my ſenſations at that inſtant! I thought he was irrecoverably gone: but with proper aſſiſtance he came a little to himſelf, and with a feeble voice called for his Henry. I approached him almoſt ſtupefied with ſorrows, and my dying parent commiſſioned the faithful Hammond to comfort his ſon: nor need I aſſure you that this dear friend has truly fulfilled the admonition. My father then informed me he had ſettled every worldly concern: "You will ſoon, ſaid he, Henry, be entitled to a very ſplendid fortune. Make a good uſe of your proſperous ſituation, and let the poor and miſerable partake of your generoſity." I was too much abſorbed in grief to reply: 'Tis impoſſible to expreſs my feelings. But the precept, I hope, will ever have its due weight, ſince the author ſo eminently practiſed what he enjoyed. He then earneſtly recommended to my protection his amiable ward, Miſs Caroline Dudley,—a young lady with whoſe hiſtory, madam, you ſhall

ſoon be acquainted, but at preſent I am unable to relate it. She is now at a boarding ſchool, and is about fourteen years of age. My father added, "This amiable girl's fortune is great: place her, on her leaving ſchool, with ſome female friend, who may guide her to virtue and happineſs; but this I leave to your prudence; act as you think I ſhould have acted. You know Mr. Pemberton is her intended huſband: her father determined it by his will; and if his daughter refuſed, half her fortune was directly to be ſettled on her couſin, Miſs Freelove, who is at preſent in the country." Excuſe, deareſt madam, this digreſſion; I am too conſcious of having intruded on your patience, to proceed in relating the ſcene that followed. Why ſhould I pain the amiable ſenſibility you poſſeſs? Why ſhould I wiſh you to participate in the ſufferings of your Clarendon? I will draw a veil over the awful cataſtrophe, and only ſay, that as my father lived like a Chriſtian, he died as one, who hoped to partake of thoſe bleſſed rewards annexed to the practice of piety and virtue. The trial is truly great; his admonitions have ſunk into my ſoul! and had

had it not been for the friendly conſolations of my worthy Hammond, I know not when I ſhould have been ſo far recovered, as even to have written to my excellent Miſs Melville. Little did I think, when you ſo obligingly permitted me this favour, that the ſubject would have been thus tinged with ſorrow's affecting colours. A ſick chamber, and its melancholy appendages, are topicks little ſuited to the generality of your ſex, eſpecially if ſurrounded with worldly felicity, and adorned with ſuch external charms as diſtinguiſh my fair correſpondent. But, when the heart is oppreſſed, how naturally do we ſeek to relieve it by unburthening our minds to a dear and faithful friend! In this endearing character I conſider the amiable lady I am now writing to, and truſt that the innate goodneſs of her heart will not be diſpleaſed at the liberty I take. I think I have diſcovered in your mind ſentiments far above the ſcale of your inexperienced years. Where then, my dear Miſs Melville, have you attained thoſe manifold accompliſhments you poſſeſs? Are they merely innate? or tell me if derived from education?—and in that place where *you*

happily gained them, there would I above all others fix my little Caroline. But, how I write! What education could beſtow upon you thoſe inimitable graces, that both adorn and dignify your character? Nature, kind nature beſtowed them; and your own good ſenſe, joined with the direction of ſome worthy friend, has rendered them the neareſt ſemblance of all mental perfection. O, madam, what happineſs do I promiſe myſelf in the endearing converſation of ſuch a friend! What ſcenes does my imagination paint of tender felicity, when I ſhall have the unſpeakable happineſs to call ſo much perfection mine! Tranſporting thought! yet pardon the intruſion; when I reflect on my recent loſs, how would it have pleaſed my honoured father to have beheld our union! But huſh, my ſoul: murmur not at the diſpenſations of Providence: it is the Almighty's command, and I deſire to ſubmit with full reſignation to his will: But why does rebel nature thus force me to complain? Indeed, my lovely Miſs Melville, it requires the exertion of all my fortitude to enable me to ſuſtain this very ſudden ſhock. I will not expatiate on the virtues of my father; his

his behaviour has more forcibly ſhewn them than the fineſt panegyrick of ſtudied eloquence. I am ſure you will not deny me the indulgence of a line. It will, indeed, be my beſt conſolation; and every thing that falls from your pen will derive additional weight from a tender conſideration of the tranſcendent goodneſs of the writer. Adieu, my beloved Miſs Melville, and believe me to be,

Your faithful and affectionate,

H. CLARENDON.

Miſs MASHAM to Miſs FREELOVE.

Bury-ſtreet.

NONE of the ſchemes I had formed will ſucceed, therefore I ſhall not trouble you with a recital; ſuffice it to ſay, I am miſerable. I have ſeen Clarendon, and he behaves to me with the ſame unaffected politeneſs as uſual, yet avoids any particular converſation; and even when I ſpeak of his beloved Harriett, he turns the diſcourſe, as if with predetermined caution. Too amiable man! O, Betſy, what can I do? How have I expoſed my weakneſs! Yet, as I perſuade my-

ſelf I am only expoſed to ſuch a cenſor, the generoſity of his heart will, I am ſure, prevent the world from knowing my folly. My laſt letter was written in all the tumult of paſſion; my reaſon was entirely ſwallowed up with this violent diſturber: and now that the ſtorm is ſubſided, imagination does but the more keenly ſhew me my miſery. O the cruel thought! Shall another poſſeſs the affection of Mr. Clarendon? Forbid it Heaven! But why do I ſay forbid it? It is already certain, it is determined; I am deſpicable in his eyes. I hardly know what I write: he is no more *Mr.* Clarendon; his father died the other day ſuddenly, and of courſe his title and immenſe fortune deſcend to this too cruel ſon. I fear in endeavouring to pleaſe him I have miſtaken the method; others have flattered my vanity, told me the moſt egregious falſehoods, and made me think my charms were irreſiſtible. How is my pride fallen! I cannot help hating the happy Miſs Melville. Did you ever ſee Sir Henry? I will endeavour to deſcribe his perſon: he is tall and well made, his complexion clear, and heightened by the fineſt bloom imaginable;

His

His eyes are dark and piercing; yet, when he pleaſes, the moſt engaging ſoftneſs plays about them; for inſtance, when he talks to his Harriett. His noſe and mouth are beyond expreſſion pleaſing, and as he ſpeaks; two rows of the whiteſt ivory are ſeen. His manner is attractive and manly, polite and affable to all—Yet why do I write thus? he is deſtined for another; but, it muſt not be: I hope ſtill to prevent Miſs Melville's happineſs: She cannot love as I do. You aſk me in your letter, if any thing has happened in the *beau monde?* I do not know: much as I enjoy a little ſcandal, I cannot even attend to that. O yes! indeed it is reported, that Lady Rayner has had a *tete-a-tete* with Sir Philip Clendon, and that a ſeparation will enſue betwixt her and Sir William: it is ſaid likewiſe, that Miſs Draper is eloped with her hair-dreſſer; and that Lady M—— is retired into the country. I do not pretend to ſay what I have written is true, but Mr. Furbiſher is my author, and he had it from Mrs. Odley's tea-table. I muſt, I believe, go abroad this evening, and endeavour to forget my Henry, with

the diverſion of cards and a little ſcandal. Write ſoon, I charge you. Sir Henry is come to London. Adieu!

Yours, &c.

HESTER MASHAM.

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Miſs MELVILLE to Sir H. CLARENDON.

BELIEVE me, ſir, I ſympathize with you more than I am capable of expreſſing. Your filial piety is truly ſhewn by every line in your letter. I can really pity you, as I too have known the dreadful trial you have experienced. I have attended the ſick chamber of a dying parent. Why do I ſay parent? did I not alſo hear the laſt words that were ever ſpoken by the tendereſt of mothers! Excuſe, ſir, theſe involuntary obliterations: my tears will flow at the painful recollection. I greatly admired your father; I cannot ſuppreſs my grief at ſo irreparable a loſs. Little do you know me, ſir, if you imagine an apology can be neceſſary, for mentioning the awful ſcenes to which you have been a witneſs. Poor are the moſt flattering proſpects of this tranſitory world, when com-

compared with thoſe of an endleſs ſtate. What are beauty, riches, honour, wealth? We need not the experience of age to convince us of their inſtability. Happy are they who have the fortitude you practice. What conſolation can I write to one ſo well qualified by precept and example to behave with reſignation and compoſure? I can only ſay that the ways of Heaven are above our comprehenſion; or why do we ſee the unworthy and the diſſolute live and flouriſh, whilſt goodneſs and virtue are ſo frequently cut off, and conſigned to the grave where all things are forgotten? Why do we behold modeſt merit ſtruggling with misfortunes, whilſt pride and arrogance apparently enjoy every bleſſing that proſperity can beſtow? Theſe queſtions will occur to a thinking being: yet all enquiry is ineffectual; we may be certain, however, that the time will arrive, when theſe varied diſpenſations will appear to have been entirely conſiſtent with infinite juſtice and wiſdom. Thus, ſir, you ſee I have profited by your example, and written to you with the freedom and ſincerity of a friend. I imagine this letter will find you in town. Have you ſeen my

brother lately? I have not heard from him ſome time; his conduct gives me great uneaſineſs: I beg you will kindly cultivate his acquaintance, for my ſake; and above all others, for his own. Your example muſt have more effect than ten thouſand precepts. I feel myſelf extremely intereſted about Miſs Caroline Dudley. Where is Mr. Pemberton? I hope ſhe will approve of him. I have written to the end of my paper, and fear your patience is well tired: Be aſſured, I am,

Your ſympathizing friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

CHARLES MELVILLE, Eſq; to Sir PHILIP CLENDON.

Wincheſter.

A Plaguy accident has obliged me to ſtop longer in this town than I deſire. You know I have been in Hampſhire, on a viſit to James Freelove; and as I came back, the poſt-chaiſe was overturned, I believe by the d——d careleſsneſs of the driver, about half a mile from this place. I felt no immediate inconvenience;

convenience; but find my arm is much bruiſed, and my left ſide is now very painful. I am as impatient as any one can be. I hate confinement; however, my fingers are at liberty, and I will write. Did you ever ſee Freelove's ſiſter? — a good handſome girl, faith; not a little coquettiſh: I have had enough of her. How does Harriett do? tell her I am confined, and that will ſave my writing to her; for if I did, I know ſhe will ſend me a ſermon in return, on repentance, and ſuch ſtuff: and yet, I believe ſhe may be right, and ſometimes wiſh I could think as ſhe does: ſhe is a ſweet girl, and will make Clarendon happy. Do you know that I am in love? Who do you gueſs is the object? Not the flirting Betſy Freelove, nor the affected Miſs Maſham; but it is the lovely Sophia Weldon. I am ſure you are ſurpriſed; but I am in earneſt, and could I ſhake off this diſſipated temper, why I might become, you know, a very ſober huſband. And yet there is ſomething in that appellation diſguſts me; but if ever I hope to ſecure this dear girl, I muſt take the yoke of marriage. I would not even attempt to gain her otherwiſe. Moſt wo-

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men appear eaſy conqueſts, but this lovely girl awes me from the leaſt diſtant idea of ſhocking her delicacy, by that amiable behaviour which ſhines in every action. I took this journey merely to ſee what effect abſence would have; but it won't do, my paſſion remains unabated: I have ever carefully concealed it, even from your knowledge, but I am now prepared to receive your raillery. My ſiſter and Sophia have not any notion of my attachment. I always behaved to her with an innocent familiarity, but never talked of love. She is indeed a ſweet girl; but, can I reſign my liberty? how can I inſure a conſtant paſſion for her? My volatile changeable diſpoſition, ever roving from one object to another, cannot, I fear, be contented with the ſtupid converſation of a ſolitary wife. Yes, Clendon, I am not certain but this beloved object, if ſhe becomes my wife, may then prove as diſagreeable to me, as ſhe is at preſent deſirable: ſo capricious is my temper. Do you remember my excurſion into Eſſex? if you do, you muſt recollect the circumſtance of my meeting with a beautiful country girl. I told you, that I forced her to town, and of-

fered

fered her the moſt tempting allurements to conſent to live with me,—for indeed I found her education had been far ſuperior to her ſituation in life;—but all to no purpoſe: for ſhe was deaf to intreaties, ſcouted my moſt ſplendid offers; and in ſhort, fool as I was, I let her go. Curſed chance brought her to my ſiſter's acquaintance, and the little whimpering ſimpleton made out a fine ſtory to her, inſomuch, that Harriett taxed me with the girl's ruin, and I know not when her preaching would have ended, had I not ſilenced her by ſome droll reply. But what were my ſenſations, when the lovely Sophia entered the room at that inſtant? She bluſhed, and looked confounded; and I interpreted her bluſhes, as being aſhamed for my conduct. I was for the firſt time in my life abaſhed, which my ſiſter attributed to her accuſation: they were then going to viſit the girl, whom I ſincerely regretted that I had ever beheld, as my paſſion for her was a temporary one, founded on mere youthful inclination. Harriett has well provided for her. I do believe I ſhall in time become a moſt perfect Benedict. To tell you the truth, Clendon, I am heartily tired

of

of this way of life; and, for once, let me make you a confeſſor. The reaſon of my becoming ſo great a rake, was abſolutely the thought of being laughed at by my gay companions;—and you were one of the number. Now, after this confeſſion, have not I reaſon to fear your raillery? Your firſt queſtion undoubtedly will be, Whence, Charles, comes this ſudden change? I anſwer, It is not ſudden; I have long purpoſed to reform; but, upon my ſoul, I never knew where to begin: and though I apparently ſlighted my ſiſter's advice, I inwardly felt its influence. Beſides all this, my paſſion for the gentle Sophia has been no ſmall inducement to commence a reformation. Notwithſtanding what I have written, I am a very changeable being; nor can I be certain, when health returns, whether I ſhall think as I do at preſent. Indeed, I am not well; my left arm is painful, and Mr. A. ſays I have a fever: he forbids me writing, but his prohibition only made me more deſirous to write; and as I have begun, I will write on to the end of my paper. I am rather uneaſy, Clendon, at an affair which, I truſt, your friendſhip will ſoon ſettle. I owe Jack Mordaunt 500l.—

500l.—No matter for what; but I beg you will pay this trifle for me. What a confounded dull place is this Wincheſter now, confined as I am at a deteſted inn! But better or worſe, I am determined to be in London ſoon. Mr. A. ſays, I muſt not ſtir this fortnight; but he will be cunning to keep me againſt my will. The pens are ſo d——d bad, and the ink ſo thick, that I fancy you muſt put on ſpectacles to read this ſcrawl;—I am tired of it. So adieu, and be aſſured I am,

Your vexed friend,

CHARLES MELVILLE.

Sir PHILIP CLENDON, to CHARLES MELVILLE, Eſq;

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

I Have not time to anſwer one paſſage in your letter; ſo ſhall only ſay, it is confounded motley ſtuff. I muſt needs be making love to Lady Rayner, which I ſuppoſe is come to the knowledge of her ſtupid huſband. I know not how the affair will end. Clarendon's father is dead; he

he comes into an immenſe fortune. His intended bride is at preſent in the country, with your Sophia. I hear they will ſoon return. I begged Harry to acquaint Miſs Melville of your ſituation; take care of your health, and I hope, as it mends, your ſpirits will keep ſome decent pace with it; for, faith! you ſeem to be curſedly in the vapours. Hang me, if I thought you were ſuch a milk-ſop; your epiſtle was all ding-dong, like an Abbey bell. I am ſadly vexed at a recent diſappointment;—but you ſhall hear more very ſoon. I will pay Mordaunt the caſh you mention. Adieu, dear doleful Charles! you may ever command the heart and purſe of,

Your friend,

PHILIP CLENDON.

P. S. Very probably you may ſoon ſee me at Wincheſter.

LADY RAYNER to MISS MELVILLE.

INDEED, my beloved Harriett, I have been tormented alternately with fear and ſuſpenſe, ever ſince I wrote to you. Had

Had I acted prudently, my anxieties would happily have been prevented; I am even now all impatience. If I can, I will relate the juſt occaſion that excites this unuſual uneaſineſs: but firſt let me inform you, all your ſuſpicions of Sir Henry Clarendon are groundleſs: you have undoubtedly heard the reaſon of his apparent neglect. He ſpeaks of you with ſuch warmth of real affection, and I am ſure loves you ſo ardently, that I hope you will not wait for the uncertain arrival of your uncle Melville before you render Sir Henry the happieſt of men. O Harriet, that I had followed your advice! that I had taken the counſel you once ſo tenderly offered! but my own imprudence began my miſery. My laſt letter was finiſhed juſt as I read the note from Sir Philip: if my reſolution had but remained of treating him with ſilent contempt, I might have been happy at this inſtant. No ſooner had I ſent your letter to the poſt, than (the writing implements before me) I took up my pen, and anſwered the affronting note in the diſdainful language my heart dictated. I had directed it, and went into my cloſet for ſome ſealing wax, when I heard Sir William

liam enter my dreſſing room. The unlucky note was placed upon the table, and the extraordinary ſuperſcription undoubtedly excited his curioſity: he took it up; I reſented the unjuſt liberty, as I thought, and ſnatched it out of his hand. Ah, Harriett! why did I act thus? Had he read it, he muſt have perceived my innocence; but truly, I reſented the liberty he had taken in endeavouring to peruſe my letters. To tell you the truth, confuſion abundantly more predominated in my mind, than reſentment; and I believe I ſcarcely knew what I did. Inſtead of openly avowing my innocence, I aſked Sir William if I was always to be intruded upon in that manner. Inſtead of relating the motive of my writing to Sir Philip, and telling him I plainly ſaw the error I had committed, I imprudently ſaid, that my retirements muſt not be invaded; and the confuſion that appeared in my countenance, I ſuppoſe, was conſtrued into flagrant guilt. How much preferable is honeſt ſincerity to equivocal anſwers, or feigned reſentment! I ſaw the gathering ſtorm in Sir William's countenance: I dreaded his juſt diſpleaſure; and when he taxed me with a character my

ſoul

ſoul abhorred, I thought I ſhould have ſunk upon the ground. "Is it well, madam, cried he, to treat me thus? to hold a clandeſtine correſpondence with that worthleſs libertine? My ſuſpicions I now find are too juſt. I ſhould not have treated you with ſuch indifference as I have lately, had I not reaſon to ſuppoſe that another object engaged your affections. Henceforth, no more ſhall my heart retain for you any ſentiments of eſteem; you are unworthy my regard." I pleaded now my innocence, as well as I could: I ſaw my imprudent behaviour too plainly. "I beg, Sir William, you will moderate your paſſion; and my innocence muſt clearly be demonſtrated." I could not proceed, but threw myſelf into a chair, and burſt into tears: "So, madam, you have learned, I ſee, this accompliſhment of your ſex—curſed whimpering! If you were innocent, why did ſuch ſolicitous eagerneſs appear in your behaviour, when I took up the note? why did you with ſuch unparalleled unpoliteneſs tear it from me? were you not afraid of my reading the contents? And why, added he, in a ſarcaſtical tone, did you not have recourſe to the d—d art

of

of your ſex, by ſaying you were only anſwering a polite note from Sir Philip, as he had juſt preſented you with maſquerade tickets?"

This cutting ſpeech raiſed my indignation, and I replied, "Sir William, you forget who you are ſpeaking to; you ſeem well acquainted with the artful part of our ſex; but know, Sir, I ever diſdained ſuch practices; my heart recoils at the thought, and if you will have a little patience, I ſhall ſoon convince you how different my ſentiments are, and how unjuſt your own. I beg therefore, Sir William, that you will peruſe this note, which has cauſed ſo much contention." He appeared ſoftened, and was going to take it in his hand; but on getting up to give it him, I unluckily dropped Sir Philip's billet cloſe by his foot. "May I look at this likewiſe, madam?" ſaid he.—Seeing the direction he ſtarted; "By heaven, it is Sir Philip's hand-writing! This is too much; here, madam, take your note till I have read this." He went to the window, and after he had peruſed it, the agitation of his countenance was ſuch as cannot be deſcribed. He pauſed and leant againſt the wainſcot, exclaimed

claimed "perfidious villain!" muttered ſomething about revenge, and flew down ſtairs before I had time to intreat him to ſtay. O Harriett! judge of my unhappy ſituation. I rang the bell, ordered my woman to bring me a glaſs of water; and aſked her if Sir William was at home, She ſaid, her maſter, after writing a note in his ſtudy, (as John told her) went out much diſcompoſed. Is John gone out? ſaid I. "No madam; but he is going with the note:" "Deſire him then to come to me directly." I endeavoured to compoſe myſelf, and coolly aſked him if his maſter had not given him a letter to take as far as Cavendiſh-ſquare. He anſwered, yes. Give it me, John, replied I; he gave it me, and I ſaw it was directed to Sir Philip Clendon. "Ay, continued I, I know the purpoſe of this note, it is about the maſquerade; I will keep it till your maſter comes in: I have altered my mind, and ſhall not go." This ſettled, I immediately diſmiſſed Rivers, to give a full vent to my grief; and after eaſing my heart by a flood of tears, found myſelf tolerably compoſed. I did not open the note, but I dreaded the contents: I wiſhed you were

with

with me, Harriett. Why did I give Sir William reaſon to ſuſpect me? God knows, my intention was innocent. I never had the leaſt diſtant idea of preferring Sir Philip to my huſband; you are acquainted with my ſentiments of this coxcomb. But what now avails complaining, ſince I have been ſo imprudent as to riſk my peace of mind, and thus made myſelf appear contemptible in the eyes of Sir William? I will not loſe time in harraſſing my ſpirits by vain reflections; but I muſt endeavour to convince him how much he wrongs me by his bad opinion. Mercy, what a taſk! How ſhall I convince an obſtinate man that he is miſtaken! O my ſweet friend, now your admonitions recur to me; now do I reflect on that excellent advice you formerly gave me, and which I received with ſo much levity. Such were my reflections. At this inſtant, my mother, attended by Mrs. Lalum and her ſweet children, called upon me: I endeavoured to appear compoſed: I attempted to play with my little favourite Betſy Lalum. I believe the child perceived my eyes were ſwelled and red, for ſhe aſked me if I had been crying? If you have, ſaid the little prattler,

prattler, let me kiſs you, and that will cure you." I embraced her to ſtifle my emotion, and told her ſhe was a little chatter-box; but I could not help letting fall a tear at the moment I ſpoke. Mrs. Lalum called her, and diverted the child from obſerving me; yet, I am ſure, ſhe muſt have diſcovered my uneaſineſs. This conſiderate lady took her leave, ſaying: "What do you think, George, of a walk in the Park, this morning? Mrs. Weldon, you will excuſe me, I ſhall ſee you in the evening." I had not power to detain her; and when ſhe was gone, I related all that I have written to my indulgent mother; who, far from reproaching me by the leaſt unkind word or look, dropped the tear of ſympathy, and adviſed me to act in the following manner: "My dear Charlotte, ſaid ſhe, have patience; all will yet be well: you are young, and inexperienced; but I am perſuaded your heart is inclined to rectitude. When Sir William comes home, calmly relate to him the whole affair: tell him you have detained the note he had written to Sir Philip, as fearing it might contain a challenge; and that you find the error of your con-

duct, in having at all countenanced the idea of your giving a feigned preference to a worthleſs man. Tell him your motive, and confeſs without reſerve, that you clearly ſee you have acted wrong. You know, my dear, Sir William is generous: he loves you, and cannot fail of aſſuring you he is entirely ſatisfied." Much more ſhe added, and her expreſſions were kind and compaſſionate: I entreated her to ſtay, but this beloved parent ſaid my father expected her to dinner, and as ſhe wiſhed this affair to be an entire ſecret, ſhe thought it would be better to go home. Her carriage drove to the door, and ſhe left me.

I again retired to my cloſet, liſtening to every knock at the door; every footſtep I fancied was Sir William's; it was paſt four, and he not come in: I felt all impatience. I hoped he would not meet Sir Philip. The ſervant came in, and informed me Sir Henry Clarendon was below. I went down ſtairs; I concealed from him my emotion, and dreſſed my features with artificial ſmiles. Happy Harriet! worthy Sir Henry! he looked charmingly; mourning becomes him. He only called, he ſaid, to pay me his compliments, (little

did

did he know how unfit I was to receive them!) and added, "I have ſeen Sir Philip Clendon, madam, who tells me Mr. Melville is ill at Wincheſter; are you informed of his illneſs?"—"I am ſurprized, Sir Henry, at what you ſay; does Harriett know her brother is indiſpoſed?"—"She will, madam, as ſoon as this letter reaches her, taking one from his pocket. I have a friend going directly into Devonſhire, and if your ladyſhip has written to my Harriett, Mr. Hammond will be proud of the honour of delivering your letter." I thanked him, but told him, I had not finiſhed mine. I could not leave you, Harriett, in ſuſpence; and I enquired more particularly about your brother. He informed me, his letter to you contained a full account; and he briefly related to me the accident that occaſioned his illneſs. By this time you are acquainted with it; therefore I may ſpare myſelf the trouble of repeating what Sir Henry ſaid. Be not uneaſy about Charles; confinement will do him no harm: your charming Harry ſtaid a little while. Greatly as I admire him, my mind was too much agitated to converſe with my uſual vivacity. I could not help

aſking him where he met Sir Philip; he anſwered, "I ſaw him, madam, this morning, juſt going to Wincheſter; indeed, I called at his houſe, the chaiſe was at the door, and upon my expreſſing my aſtoniſhment at his being ſo early a riſer, he informed me where he was going, and intended he ſaid to bring Charles to town with him." O Harriett! how I inwardly bleſſed the dear man for this information! He took his leave with that graceful elegance peculiar to himſelf; I went again into my dreſſing-room, and there waited, watching with impatience the coming of Sir William. Believe me, my ſweet friend, I was eaſier from the moment I knew that the deteſted Sir Philip was out of town: no bad conſequences can yet enſue, thought I, betwixt the two Baronets, and may the heavenly powers aſſiſt me to perſuade Sir William of my innocence! The ſervant told me dinner was ready: I had no appetite, but went down, or it muſt have appeared ſtrange to the domeſticks. I ate, or rather beheld, a ſolitary dinner, and ſoon diſpatched the attendants; for I thought myſelf ſurrounded with ſplendid miſery. What availed to my diſtreſſed mind, the

elegance

elegance of our houſe or furniture;—the liveried ſervants, or the moſt coſtly attire? But away reflection! O that Sir William would come in! I cannot bear he ſhould entertain of me ſo vile an opinion. In the mind I was then in, I could have thrown myſelf at his feet, and implored forgiveneſs. Would to Heaven I had continued ſo humble! About eight in the evening, Sir William knocked at the door; I was then ſitting in the drawing-room, ſometimes taking up my netting, ſometimes touching the harpſichord; but its ſounds were diſcordant to my ear: nothing eaſed my anxious mind. Sir William entered the room, and ſeeing me, ſaid, I beg pardon, madam, for intruding on your privacy; and immediately retired. How this contempt raiſed my indignation! the humility of my heart was entirely diſpelled; I wept and raved, all to no purpoſe; but I took courage, and followed him into his ſtudy. He was reading; his looks teſtified his indignation, but ſtill regarded the book with a feigned attention. "Pray, Sir William, ſaid I, do you chooſe to hear what I am about to relate? very poſſibly you may repent if you do not. I have been miſerable

ſerable ſince you went out, leſt paſſion ſhould have hurried you to be deſperate. He ſtill continued reading; I proceeded, "Am I, Sir, to be treated thus contemptuouſly? I cannot bear it: conſcious of my innocence, it hurts me to the ſoul." I advanced, and laid my hand upon his arm—"Sir William, hear me." He ſtarted up, flung from me with diſdain, and ſaid: "None of your arts, madam! I will not be impoſed upon; but ſince I muſt ſee you at ſo unwelcome a time, anſwer me this plain queſtion: Do you know where Sir Philip Clendon is gone?" What could I ſay, Harriet! however, hoping we ſhould come to an explanation, I replied: "Yes, Sir William, I do; but I aſſure you, chance alone afforded me the information." He ſtopped me ſhort, ſaying: "Nay, madam, I do not want to be acquainted how you knew it; but now I am ſatisfied with his cowardice. As to you, Lady Rayner, I beſeech you to leave me; I was very well entertained before you diſturbed me. I may, perhaps to-morrow, be in better humour to re-capitulate;" and he immediately entered a light cloſet adjoining to the room, ſhut the door, and left

left me, burſting with indignation at his behaviour. Good Heavens, Harriett, what will to-morrow produce! And yet, have I behaved ſo criminally as to deſerve this barbarous treatment? No, but I have acted imprudently. I gave encouragement to a man I deſpiſed, which has created jealouſy in the mind of Sir William; and this is the reaſon why he uſes me thus! Adieu, Harriet, for this evening; I expect a letter from you to-morrow.

Thurſday morning, ten o'clock.

Sir William is not yet come in to breakfaſt: Rivers brings me a letter from you. Thank you for it, my dear friend; thank you for your advice and kind reproofs; would to God I had received it before! I cannot now make my obſervations on your letter, but can only ſay it is written like yourſelf. Sir William knocks; I'll go down into the breakfaſting room.

Twelve o'clock.

I ſat myſelf at the table, made tea, and diſmiſſed the ſervants. When Sir William entered, I did not look at him: he went to the farther window, then came, and ſat down oppoſite to me: "Now, Lady Rayner,

ner, I am ready to hear you."—" Think not, Sir William, replied I, that I mean to excuſe my conduct by mean evaſions, or ſhuffling anſwers; but if you will have a little patience, you ſhall ſoon be convinced that I am not ſo culpable as you imagine. Firſt, permit me to obſerve that I have acted wrong, and I acknowledge my error." I then briefly recounted to him my motives for behaving ſo unguardedly to Sir Philip, and by that means drawing upon myſelf the affronting billet. I told him I feared the confuſion he found me in had been conſtrued into guilt; but I aſſured him it proceeded from indignation towards the unworthy writer; and had he ſtaid to have read my anſwer, I flattered myſelf he would have been ſatisfied of the truth of what I ſaid. Believe me, Sir William, added I, it was your cool reception that cauſed me to act ſo unworthily; here, ſir; pray peruſe my anſwer: this is a copy." He read it attentively, and at length ſaid, " I am ſatisfied, madam, in this point of your conduct; I own I was too much agitated yeſterday to attend to your excuſes;

cuſes; and I muſt ſay your unreaſonable interruption laſt night provoked me. Now I am calm: tell me then, with undiſſembled ſincerity, how you knew that Sir Philip was gone out of town? for I ſent a note to his houſe yeſterday, of which he has not taken the leaſt notice." "Moſt readily, Sir William, replied I." I then acquainted him with your Henry's viſit, and related our converſation concerning your brother. "As to the deteſted note, if Sir Philip had been in town, it would have ſignified nothing: pardon me when I tell you, it was I that prevented the ſervant's carrying it; for enquiring if you were gone out yeſterday morning, Rivers anſwered me in the affirmative, but that you had previouſly written a note. My fears inſtantly ſuggeſted to me terrible ideas. I had no doubt but you meant to chaſtiſe the inſolence of Sir Philip: and imagining the billet contained a challenge, I made no ſcruple of detaining it. I again entreat your pardon; but my fear for your ſafety induced me to act thus. Here is the note, the ſeal is unbroken." He took it, ſaying, "However I might blame you

at another time for ſuch a proceeding, the confeſſion of your motive is now a ſufficient excuſe. This note does not contain a challenge, but very likely would have produced one: Permit me then to obſerve, ſome former levity in your conduct cauſed that coldneſs towards you, which you ſpeak of. I truſt your good ſenſe has ſhewn you your error, and that your future caution will evince to me the innate virtue you poſſeſs: for my own part be aſſured, I ever loved you; and it was that cruel ſtab to my feelings, of imagining you could prefer this worthleſs libertine to me, which cauſed, and juſtly cauſed ſo much aſperity and contempt in my behaviour—Permit me to ſeal our reconciliation:" and he embraced me tenderly. I wept, but my tears proceeded from a very different cauſe to that of yeſterday. "Pardon this weakneſs, anſwered I; henceforward you ſhall have no reaſon to complain of my conduct: I flatter myſelf it is needleſs to aſſure you my heart was always yours; and however diſſipated and volatile my diſpoſition may have appeared, it proceeded not from a bad heart, but from an unreſtricted

ſtricted vivacity in my temper, which I will now firmly endeavour to correct." Sir William took my hand. "I do not wiſh, my dear, ſaid he, that you ſhould in the leaſt damp that amiable vivacity I once ſo much admired. I am now amply convinced of the rectitude of your ſentiments: I have nothing to fear or reſent; and were I to ſee your temper altered, I ſhould but reproach myſelf for having been the cauſe." So ended, Harriet, our fooliſh quarrel; and may no future animoſities ever diſturb our peace! But ſtill, my friend, I dread the conſequences that may enſue betwixt Sir Philip and Sir William: I was afraid, however, to urge this ſubject, leſt I ſhould have been thought officious. Surely the beſt method of treating this coxcomb is ſilent contempt. What will be the world's opinion, if miſchief ſhould enſue? and above all, Sir William's being expoſed to danger for my ſake diſtreſſes me. But I will not anticipate trouble; and the firſt opportunity I ſhall mention the ſubject to Sir William. Adieu, my beloved Harriett. I have been indeed in a ſtorm, but all ſeems now calm and ſerene. Pray give my kind love to Sophia: is ſhe quite

chearful? Once more adieu, and believe me to be,

Your affectionate friend,

C. RAYNER.

P. S. I acquainted Charlotte Parker with your kind attention concerning her. She is a grateful girl; but with all your care, Harriett, I do not think ſhe will be long in this world. Her health has viſibly declined ſince you left London.

Sir H. CLARENDON to Miſs MELVILLE.

HOW can I enough thank you, my charming Miſs Melville, for your obliging letter? I can only ſay I admire you, if poſſible, more than ever. The noble liberality of your ſentiments, and the elegance of your ſtile, delight me beyond expreſſion. Lovely moraliſt—how forcibly do you reaſon! with what kind ſenſibility do you condeſcend to partake of and alleviate my heart-felt ſorrow for a loſs irreparably great! My Harriett—excuſe this liberty, I muſt call you mine—how ſincerely do I thank you for your tranſporting avowal of eſteem for me! My future life ſhall be happily devoted to diſplay that gratitude

gratitude of my heart, which is now unſpeakable. After I had ſeen the laſt office performed for my excellent father, I returned to London; and how can I deſcribe the thrilling agitation I felt on entering the ſpacious houſe he ſo lately inhabited! The looks of all the ſervants teſtified their concern: I traverſed every room with a ſort of horror; But at the ſight of the apartment which this excellent man more particularly called his own, I was filled with ſenſations better imagined than deſcribed. After giving way awhile to the tendereſt emotions, I called reaſon and religion to my aid; nor am I aſhamed to own, that their united influence compoſed my bewildered ſpirits. I again read your letter, and every expreſſion in it afforded me infinite conſolation.

I am ſorry to inform you that your brother has met with a little accident, which at preſent confines him at Wincheſter; but before you receive this, he will, if well enough, have left that town for London. Sir Philip Clendon is gone to bring him up. His confinement was occaſioned by an awkward circumſtance on his coming from Southampton, near which place a friend

friend of his reſides, whom he had been viſiting: within a mile of Wincheſter, the chaiſe was overturned, from the poſtillion's having drunk, as it is ſuppoſed, a little too much. His left arm and ſide were bruiſed; a ſlight fever followed, but no danger is apprehended. Therefore, my beloved Harriet, be not uneaſy; let it not hurry you to town, nor alarm your ſpirits. I will certainly let you know how he is, on his arrival in London. Lady Rayner is very well, as is likewiſe the amiable family in Albemarle-ſtreet: they will not go to Richmond till you and their Sophia return. I beg my reſpects to this deſerving young lady. I love her ſincerely for the friendſhip ſhe bears my Harriett. The gentleman who preſents this letter to you, is my faithful friend—can he want a better recommendation than that title? Pardon this ſelf-flattery. He will himſelf ſoon convince you of his worth; I ſhall not therefore endeavour to prepoſſeſs you in his favour. How kindly you expreſs yourſelf about Caroline! Permit me briefly to anſwer your obliging enquiry. Her father and mine were long connected by the indiſſoluble ties of friendſhip; and when

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Mr. Dudley died, about two years ſince, he left my father guardian to his little darling, and joined me with him as one of his executors, and truſtees of her fortune. Mr. Pemberton is now abroad, for whom Mr. Dudley always entertained the higheſt regard; and indeed the many virtues of this amiable young man muſt prejudice any impartial perſon in his favour. As Mr. Dudley had lived almoſt on the terms of a real parent from his earlieſt infancy, no wonder the young gentleman retained the ſincereſt love and veneration for ſo good a friend. Old Mr. Pemberton died whilſt his ſon was in the cradle; and, by his will, left Mr. Dudley the guardian and protector of the infant, for whom he had made an ample proviſion. Mr. Dudley having then no child, he received the infant immediately into his houſe, and ever ſhewed him a paternal affection. When George Pemberton was four years of age, Caroline came into the world; and as ſhe grew up, an increaſing fondneſs mutually appeared in the behaviour of this little pair. Her infant tongue delighted to liſp the name of brother; and George ſhewed no leſs attention to the lovely Caroline. At about

about eight years old, he was put under the tuition of a clergyman, at a diſtance; and I have often heard my father relate how ſenſibly George regretted the parting from his prattling companion: He would frequently ſend her ſuch trifling preſents as he thought would be acceptable to his nominal ſiſter; and as they advanced in years, their affection ſeemed equally to increaſe. Mr. Dudley ſaw with pleaſure the growing attachment; and as he intended his Caroline for the wife of George, his ſatisfaction was unſpeakable. When Caroline had attained the age of ten years, her excellent mother died; and Mr. Dudley immediately placed his daughter at an eminent boarding-ſchool in the country, where ſhe has remained ever ſince. I have not ſeen her very lately; but I hear ſhe grows a charming girl. I believe I mentioned before, that Mr. Dudley died two years ago, and by his will,—dictated, certainly, by a ſingular predilection,—Caroline cannot refuſe George for a huſband, without a forfeiture of half her fortune. As Mr. Pemberton's expectations are limited to the eſtate his father left him, and which, though conſiderable, is very infe-

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rior to the noble fortune of Caroline, Mr. Dudley imagined this motive would induce George to coincide with the ſupreme wiſh of his heart; the having them united! But I believe there is no need of fortune to attract him; he is ſincerely devoted to Caroline. At preſent he is in Paris; his ſtay there is uncertain: but I may venture to affirm he will acquire by travelling all that is worthy his purſuit, and far more than I fear is generally ſought for. Indeed he wanted nothing but a little more experience in the world when he ſet out; for nature has abundantly done her part in beſtowing upon him all thoſe graces, air, addreſs, and demeanor, which are the diſtinguiſhing marks of a real gentleman. He has written to me ſince the death of my father, and expreſſes himſelf in ſuch friendly terms, as ſhews me the ſincerity of his attachment. He likewiſe tenderly mentions his Caroline, laments her great misfortune by the death of my father; but kindly adds, he is certain I will not be wanting in my endeavours to ſupply his loſs, and hints his wiſhes that Caroline would chooſe me as her guardian. I have no doubt but ſhe will: I intend paying her

her a viſit very ſoon. There is ſomething very peculiar in this lady's ſituation; ſeldom do the wiſhes of parents ſucceed, when they endeavour to biaſs the affections of their children: but I hope, in this inſtance, ſucceſs will crown the good intentions of Mr. Dudley. He certainly thought Pemberton would render Caroline happy, or he could not have laid her under ſo rigid a reſtriction in regard to her fortune. They are both yet very young; and may neither ſuffer their affections to wander, as in all probability happineſs will attend their union. Thus, dear madam, have I given you a brief account of my young friend. Happy ſhall I be to introduce her, on your return, to the acquaintance of a lady, who is ſo well qualified to guide her youthful heart to every virtuous purſuit! Nor can I doubt but that your natural benevolence will rejoice to communicate to an inexperienced girl thoſe ſentiments of innate purity and virtue, with which your own heart is ſo amply replete.

I earneſtly long for the expiration of the time you have allotted to ſpend with your friends in Devonſhire. London looks blank; even the ſpacious houſe in Albemarle-

marle-ſtreet has, to me, loſt many charms, whilſt deprived of its lovely inhabitant. So ſelfiſh am I, that I even envy Mrs. Maynard your converſation. Do not, deareſt Miſs Melville, do not exceed another week. Bleſſed period, when I ſhall again behold the lovelieſt of her ſex! My impatience is intolerable; without you I do not feel alive, and cannot call that exiſtence life, which tells me you are abſent: I only move mechanically. Adieu, my beauteous Harriet, and believe me to be,

Your faithful and affectionate,

HENRY CLARENDON.

From the SAME to the SAME.

IT is with the greateſt pleaſure I can inform my Harriett, that her brother is much better; he is juſt come to town: I called at his lodgings, and found him rather fatigued with his journey. He mentioned you with the utmoſt tenderneſs, when I told him I ſhould do myſelf the pleaſure of writing to you; begged me to ſend his affectionate love, and called you, with an emphaſis that ſtruck me forcibly, "his amiable ſiſter, his trueſt friend upon earth."

earth." Mr. Melville has many good qualities, my Harriett; he is generous and lively; and if I may preſume to be a judge, I think his natural temper is inclined to virtue; but, having fallen into bad company, of more vivacity than reflection, he has adopted principles, which I firmly believe he deſpiſes. The mind thus vitiated by diſſipation and extravagance, knows not how to throw off the ſlavery of cuſtom; and the fear of being laughed at by the votaries of vice has deterred many young men from reforming. This is certainly a weakneſs; and, I imagine, requires reſolution to conquer. Your brother is acquainted with many perſons, whoſe minds are loſt to every ſenſe of virtue, and whoſe actions correſpond entirely with their ſentiments. He has even formed an intimacy with ſeveral; no wonder then, that a young man, ſo naturally diſpoſed to enjoy ſocial conviviality, ſhould be led away by the example of his pretended friends. Great allowances are to be made for youth and inexperience; and his diſpoſition, in itſelf amiable, is perhaps the very ſource from whence his immoralities ſpring. I doubt not that the good ſenſe

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he is bleſſed with will ſhew him the error of his conduct; yet I muſt honeſtly confeſs to you, there is a vice he too much delights in—I mean gaming. To eradicate this propenſity will require great reſolution indeed: his other errors will naturally decreaſe; but I fear he muſt ſuffer a little before he renounces this darling inclination. As I returned from your brother's lodgings, I met Sir Philip Clendon, whom you, I believe, are acquainted with; I accoſted him, but he looked agitated. I enquired the reaſon; he told me he was going on a very diſagreeable buſineſs. I offered him my ſervices: he replied, "No faith, Clarendon, you cannot help me; but as we walk, I will make you my confidant." He informed me he had received a note from Sir William Rayner, who requeſted to ſee him at a neighbouring tavern: "Now, added he, I gueſs the reaſon of his appointment: You know Lady Rayner; ſhe is a charming woman; I imagined I obſerved in her a partiality for me. You are well enough acquainted with my diſpoſition, Sir Henry, to ſuppoſe I ſhould not eaſily miſs this opportunity of ingratiating myſelf in her ladyſhip's

favour. In fact, I uſed every method poſſible, ſo far as the eloquent language of eyes would admit, to inſure my ſucceſs; and the apparent indifference of her ſtupid huſband encouraged me exceedingly. One evening, Lady Rayner was more than commonly attentive to me; I did not then declare my paſſion, but, emboldened by her particular regard that evening, the next morning I wrote to her, avowing my love and adoration. But, how confoundedly was I miſtaken in my opinion of this lady! I at leaſt expected a favourable anſwer, but her note was dipped in verjuice, and written with ſuch ſpirit!—in ſhort, ſhe was pleaſed to demonſtrate ſo much contempt and indignation at my behaviour, that I am pretty well convinced I ſhall be diſappointed in my hopes; and I ſuppoſe ſhe has carried her reſentment ſo far as to acquaint Sir William. Now, you muſt know, Henry, I never loved fighting; how then can I recede with honour?" Believe me, my dear Harriett, I was ſhocked at what Sir Philip had related. How dared he mention *honour*, whoſe own mouth witneſſed he could have ſo little title to it! My God! to endeavour to ſeduce the wife

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of his friend, and then talk of receding with honour! I heard him very patiently, and anſwered him to the following purpoſe: "Indeed, Sir Philip, I muſt confeſs you have acted very unworthily: I am perſuaded the lady in queſtion never had the leaſt diſtant idea of ſwerving from rectitude. The natural gaiety of her temper may perhaps have induced you to ſuppoſe, that ſhe regarded you with more than common attention. Vanity ſuggeſted to your heart that ſhe did; but you ſee how much you were miſtaken: I will not expatiate on the great folly of your conduct—excuſe me, Sir Philip; but I leave it to the monitor within to determine, whether you have acted conſiſtently with the ſtrict rules of honour. You are certainly the aggreſſor, and the only method I know of to recede with honour, is, to aſk the lady's pardon in the preſence of her huſband." "By G—d, I cannot condeſcend to ſuch meanneſs," replied Sir Philip: "Be not in a paſſion, ſaid I; is it beneath the dignity of man to acknowledge an error? You cannot but confeſs you have acted wrong: you have endeavoured to injure the honour of Sir William; and would you

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for this treatment cut his throat; or perhaps receive yourſelf the favour, as a juſt recompence for your baſeneſs?"—He ſtarted; I really think theſe laſt words had more effect than all the arguments I had uſed: he replied, "Why no, Sir Henry, I have not any great inclination to die yet; nor could I reconcile myſelf to killing another: will you be preſent at our interview?" I was about to reply, when we arrived at the tavern, and met Sir William juſt at the door. "Ah, Clarendon, cried he, I rejoice to ſee you." After our mutual compliments, I was going to take my leave; but he intreated me to ſtay; then taking me aſide, informed me of the purpoſe of his coming, and begged me to be preſent, as he was certain he could confide in my prudence. The two gentlemen advanced, and Sir William taking a piece of paper out of his pocket, demanded if the other knew the hand-writing? "I do, Sir, replied Sir Philip, and I frankly declare, I wiſh I could with truth diſown it: all that I can do now is, to beg your pardon, for having attempted to infringe on the laws of honour and hoſpitality; and, if you pleaſe, I will repeat the ſame before your lady."

lady." Enough, Sir, replied Sir William, if this is ſpoken from your heart: I cannot want farther ſatisfaction. "Upon my honour, rejoined Sir Philip, I ſpeak it from my ſoul; and give me leave to obſerve, I admire Lady Rayner extremely for her contemptuous reply to my unworthy attack; for libertine as I am, I always revere that virtue in others, which I am conſciouſly deſtitute of myſelf. But I muſt own to you, Sir William, I ſhould never have openly avowed my ſentiments to her ladyſhip, had not the unguarded ſprightlineſs of her converſation inſpired me with the curſed vanity of thinking ſhe entertained a partiality for me. You ſee, Sir William, how unreſervedly I ſpeak: permit me farther to add, that I am well convinced of the innate virtue of your lady, and that her freedom and vivacity proceed only from a great flow of ſpirits, and a diſpoſition naturally addicted to gaiety; and I again repeat, I am ready to aſk her pardon for the liberty I dared to take, in writing ſo ſcandalous a note." Gueſs my ſurprize, dear Miſs Melville, to hear Sir Philip talk in this manner! I was really aſtoniſhed; but I am ſtill at a loſs to de-

termine whether his ſentiments were the genuine effuſions of remorſe, or whether he was actuated by a different motive. We will think the beſt, and attribute this great change to a genuine conſciouſneſs of his having acted wrong. Thus ended the meeting betwixt the two Baronets; Sir William appeared ſatisfied, and they parted with mutual complaiſance. I greatly rejoiced at it: for though the provocation be ever ſo great, and the motive for a duel may appear plauſible in this world, what excuſe can be framed in the next, before an heavenly tribunal, for having deprived a fellow-creature of life: or elſe for ruſhing ourſelves into the Almighty preſence, with all the weight of unrepented ſins upon our heads? Sir Philip Clendon is certainly a man of underſtanding; he early, and uncontroulably enjoyed an immenſe fortune: indeed, I think his ſituation and your brother's are very ſimilar. Some trifling ſervice which I rendered him a few years ago, introduced our preſent intimacy. Adieu, my Harriett! Are you now acquainted with the worth of Mr. Hammond? I beg you will preſent my compliments to the amiable family you are with; tell them likewiſe, how

how angry I ſhall be, if they detain you much longer. Mr. and Mrs. Weldon are in good health, and expect the return of you and their lovely daughter with great impatience. Once more adieu, beſt beloved of my ſoul! My paper obliges me to conclude; and my heart ever prompts me to aſſure you how ſincerely I am devoted to the charming Miſs Melville: Believe me to be,

Your ever grateful,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Lady RAYNER to Miſs MELVILLE.

REJOICE with me, deareſt Harriett! I am again happy. The affair is terminated amicably betwixt my lord and maſter and Sir Philip Clendon. I ſhall defer relating particulars, as I am ſo ſoon to ſee you in London. Poor Clarendon looks quite melancholy without your enlivening preſence; haſten to comfort him, I pray. Sir William is now ſo obliging, and ſo complaiſant, that we are the happieſt couple living. I begin abſolutely to love him;

be not ſurprized, Harriett, when I declare, my heart was entirely indifferent to him when we married. I never had that romantick paſſion, ſo prettily deſcribed by many love-ſick females; and yet believe I ſhall now make as good a wife as any of the ſentimental train. Seriouſly I ſhudder at what I lately eſcaped; henceforward may I be enabled to rein in my vivacity, whenever it would prompt me to ſtep beyond the rules of the ſtricteſt decorum! I am ſure I could not help the inſenſibility of my heart, when Sir William firſt addreſſed me. I found it impoſſible to fall in love; but being much perſuaded by all my friends to marry him, I yielded, hoping to experience the old ſaying, "Marry firſt, and love will follow;" and to be honeſt, vanity was a ſecondary motive to induce me to comply. The great fortune Sir William poſſeſſed, the elegant carriages, ſpacious houſes, jewels, dreſs, and many other allurements dazzled my youthful heart, and made me reſolve to become miſtreſs of them all. I thought my felicity would be unalterable, nor did I ever dream that Sir William's aſſiduity would abate. In this temper of mind was I led to the altar, and plighted my vows; aye, Harriett, without

out being in love. Yet, as my heart was all my own, and no other object poſſeſſed my eſteem, I find Sir William is alone dear to me. I am now well convinced of the tenderneſs of a woman's reputation, and hope I never more ſhall deſpiſe the world's cenſure, but follow your advice and example.

Would you believe it, the abominable Miſs Maſham reports in all companies, that Sir William and I are ſeparated! We drank tea at Mrs. Odley's yeſterday, juſt as this odious creature had finiſhed a long harangue on the ſubject: ſhe coloured, and looked juſt as confuſed as I wiſhed ſhe ſhould. It afforded a fine triumph: ſhe was almoſt ſilent the whole evening; can there be a greater puniſhment for ſuch a woman? Your brother is better. The deteſted Sir Philip is gone to Southampton. God bleſs you, Harriett; haſten, I again repeat, to your diſconſolate Henry, for then We ſhall enjoy your company. Addio! Bella Figliuola. I remain your affectionate friend,

CHARLOTTE RAYNER.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

My dear MARIA,

SOPHIA and I arrived very ſafe in London; and the next day all our family came hither for the ſummer ſeaſon. Accept our united thanks for the great attention, kindneſs, and friendſhip we experienced from you and Mr. Maynard, during our agreeable abode in Devonſhire. Mr. and Mrs. Weldon rejoice to ſee the alteration in their Sophia's countenance. My brother is frequently here, and I think appears uncommonly attentive to her. He brought down with him the other evening a beautiful canary bird, and ſo tame, that it will ſit upon one's finger, and ſeems pleaſed to be fed. Charles declared, he intended it for a very beautiful, amiable young lady. Sophia, and Mr. and Mrs. Weldon were out, when he firſt produced it; and I rallied him about the preſent, and the lady. Alas, Maria! how do I regret his diſſipated temper! When I behold his agreeable perſon, inſinuating addreſs, and captivating manner, indeed I can hardly wonder at Sophia's attachment;

tachment; yet ſurely their tempers are ſo different, that happineſs could not be expected. We were walking in the garden, and Sophia joined us, with the cage in her hand: ſhe is remarkably fond of birds, and eagerly begged to know, who had given me ſuch an enchanting little warbler. It is not mine, I replied. Charles aſked her if ſhe really liked the bird. O cried ſhe, "I never beheld ſo ſweet a fellow! and I have been charmed with a melodious ſong from the little creature; is it yours, Mr. Melville?" Do not admire it too much, ſaid I, Charles intends it for his ſweetheart; "that is more than you know, returned he; where can the bird be happier, than under the protection of the fair lady who now poſſeſſes him? Ah, Miſs Sophia! if you will accept him, I ſhall envy the little ſongſter's felicity, in being loved and cheriſhed by ſo charming a young lady. Go, little warbler, go to your new miſtreſs, and demonſtrate your gratitude by ſinging her praiſes every morning at the dawn of day." Sophia bluſhed, and heſitating, thanked Charles for the bird; ſaying, "notwithſtanding the flattery you endeavour to teach him, it cannot avail;

Dick will ſtill perſevere in the old tune he has been always accuſtomed to ſing." She has placed the ſweetly-ſinging bird in her dreſſing-room, and attends him herſelf every day. I wiſh Sophia may not encourage her paſſion for my brother; but whatever ſhe really feels, ſhe expreſſes great indifference ever ſince the affair of poor Charlotte. It is rather a delicate ſubject, and I never care to introduce it. The above-mentioned unfortunate girl is, I think, very ill; ſhe endeavours to appear chearful, but her pale cheek too plainly indicates the true ſtate of her mind. I have prevailed with her to try the air of Richmond: ſhe comes here to-morrow; but ah, Maria! what air can reſtore a wounded heart to peace and tranquillity! When I look at this excellent young woman, and reflect who has reduced her to this unhappy ſituation, my indignation is greatly raiſed againſt the author of her calamity; and though he be my only brother, I have hardly patience with his unfeelingneſs, I may ſay cruelty. I do think men's hearts in general are much leſs inclined to ſenſibility than ours; were I in my brother's ſituation, ſhould I be gay and unthinking as he is? But, alas!

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he is not the only one that acts thus! Sir William and Lady Rayner are going into Buckinghamshire next week; we expect them this evening, and to stay three or four days at Richmond. I have written a whole sheet, and not mentioned Sir Henry Clarendon: he comes here with Sir William and his lady. Oh Maria! surely your Harriett is very happy, to be beloved by so worthy a man; did not the letters I shewed you demonstrate the nobleness of his sentiments? Take care of your health, my dear friend. All this family unite in compliments; accept the love of

Your affectionate,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Sir PHILIP CLENDON to CHARLES MELVILLE, Esq.

Southampton.

AND so, Charles, you think I behaved nobly to Sir William? Yes, faith, I can behave very well when I please. You have often told me I was a confounded hypocrite: To tell you the truth, I saw the

impoſſibility of ſucceeding with Lady Rayner; and another object having pleaſed my fancy, I thought it moſt prudent to make a virtue of the exigency before me, and appear like a man of honour, though in reality I have no pretenſions to excel in the formalities that conſtitute the title. Clarendon thinks well of me, and I am reinſtated in the good opinion of Sir William. I ſaid another object pleaſed me: who ſhe is, muſt now be an abſolute ſecret; but I will tell you, ſhe has a good fortune at her own diſpoſal.

Darnton is at this town; he was much ſurprized to hear that Miſs Melville is ſtill handſome; it was reported by a certain lady, that the ſweet Harriett's beauty had greatly ſuffered when ſhe had the ſmall-pox. You know Frederick paid his addreſſes to your ſiſter, but was refuſed, which did not a little hurt his pride; and he honeſtly confeſſed to me, that he ſecretly rejoiced at the loſs of her beauty, as being the juſt puniſhment for her haughtineſs; but added, he wiſhed he had not been contented with report, and lamented he did not ſatisfy his curioſity by ſeeing her himſelf. Harriett need not now fear his moleſtation;

leſtation; he is ſhortly to be married to a young lady of this place, who gladly accepted the heart your lovely ſiſter refuſed. I ſhall be in town very ſoon, and then you may perhaps know more of the lady, who engroſſes the heart of your's,

PHILIP CLENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

I HAVE been ſo accuſtomed to writing, that I cannot help taking up my pen to addreſs my dear Maria. What a conſolalation do letters afford to abſent friends! Whenever the poſtman brings me one from you, believe me I receive it with unſpeakable pleaſure; you know I have not experienced this pleaſure lately. Sir William and Lady Rayner left Richmond yeſterday; they are gone into Buckinghamſhire. Sir Henry is frequently here. Sir Philip Clendon is returned from Southampton, and now lies dangerouſly ill in Cavendiſh-ſquare, occaſioned by overheat-

ing himſelf with riding furiouſly to join an evening party, but in vain. Sir Henry went to London on purpoſe to ſee him. I find Sir Philip owes his life to Sir Henry, as he formerly, when abroad, reſcued him from two villains, who had intended to rob and murder him. It is unneceſſary to relate particulars, but I am told it was entirely owing to Sir Henry's courage that Sir Philip eſcaped.

Charlotte's health decays very viſibly. Poor girl! I ſincerely pity her! You may perhaps wonder I ſhould aſk her to Richmond, eſpecially as there ſhe might poſſibly be expoſed to ſee Charles, who is a frequent viſitor. This was a conſideration which at firſt deterred me, but I reflected that Charlotte might always ſit in my own apartment when he was down; and indeed her ſpirits are ſo indifferent, that ſhe very ſeldom ſees the family, but totally confines herſelf up ſtairs; and if I did not force her ſometimes to walk in the garden for the benefit of the air, ſhe would never ſtir abroad. When I was with you I ſhewed you Sir Henry's letter concerning Miſs Dudley. Mrs. Weldon inſiſted he ſhould bring her to Richmond to ſtay three

or four days with us. She is accordingly to come, and we expect her every minute. I wish the intentions of Mr. Dudley may succeed, though I cannot approve of the method he has taken to render Miss Caroline happy. To-morrow we are to go with a large party on the water. I hope the weather will prove favourable: my brother comes here to-night. I expect Sir Henry likewise: he is very importunate with me not to defer our marriage. Mr. Weldon tells me with affected gravity, that if I do not consent, he shall certainly use his authority. Mrs. Weldon too persuades me; while my dear Sophia, though she pleads for Sir Henry, drops a tear at the thought of losing me. A chariot drives to the door; two ladies alight; I am sure one is Miss Dudley. I will go down stairs, and welcome our new guest.

Five o'clock.

Caroline is a very fine girl, and when she becomes a little acquainted with us, I hope to hear the sound of her voice: she looks so gentle and inoffensive, that I am charmed with her. She has hardly spoken yet, but I do not wonder at it: we are all

entire

entire ſtrangers. Her governeſs ſoon took leave; ſhe appears a very amiable woman, and we aſſured her that Miſs Dudley ſhould return to Windſor in three or four days. Sophia and I walked in the garden with her, and whilſt we were ſitting in the grove, my brother appeared haſtening towards us—No Sir Henry with him. I introduced Miſs Dudley; he politely paid her his compliments. I could not help aſking him if he knew whether Sir Henry would come down? "No, no, Harriett, he replied; he is better employed, I aſſure you; why did you refuſe his requeſt? He does well to make you feel his reſentment. Don't you think ſo, Miſs Sophia?" and careleſsly took her hand.

She bluſhed, withdrawing her hand—"No, ſir, I dare ſay Sir Henry's buſineſs is very urgent, or he would not diſappoint himſelf, by loſing the pleaſure of Harriett's company."

"Yes, yes, cried Charles, his buſineſs is indeed very preſſing; would you believe that he prefers a ſick chamber to the converſation of theſe beautiful objects before me? Stupid Clarendon!" "What do you mean, brother? exclaimed I." He took

took a letter from his pocket, "There, Harriett, ſaid he; this, perhaps, may conſole you for the loſs of his company." "Conſole me, truly! replied I; indeed, Charles, you are very provoking! Sophia, will you entertain our young friend? I muſt go in for ſomething I have forgotten."

My brother laughed—"Ah, Harriett! and ſo this letter reminds you of it? However, if the ladies will truſt themſelves with me, I will take them a delightful walk."

Sophia excuſed herſelf, ſaying the heat of the weather would be too much, and ſhe thought it pleaſanter ſitting in the grove: I left them together, but before I had finiſhed reading the letter, we were ſummoned to dinner. On my entering, Miſs Dudley aſked me, whiſperingly, if Sir Harry was ill? I aſſured her he was not: ſhe curtſied, and ſaid ſhe rejoiced to hear it. I have had very little converſation with her yet. Her perſon is elegantly made; ſhe is about fourteen, exceedingly tall of her age. Her eyes are a beautiful hazle; clear complexion; and though her features may not anſwer to the ſtricteſt

rules

rules of beauty, there is ſomething inexpreſſibly pleaſing in her countenance. She has the fineſt hair I ever ſaw: it is a bright auburn, and hangs in ringlets down her back—turned up before. Indeed, her charms are entirely owing to nature, and though ſhe may appear more faſhionable when her hair is dreſſed in the preſent taſte, I am perſuaded ſhe can never look more engaging.

I will tranſcribe Sir Henry's letter, for you muſt ſee the generous motive that prevents us the pleaſure of his company. I am called to tea, but ſhall finiſh my epiſtle this evening.

Half paſt eleven.

Now, Maria, I will copy Sir Henry's letter; for though it is late I have but little inclination for ſleep, and to-morrow we are engaged, therefore I ſhall not be able to write a line: I am ſure I had rather ſtay at home, but ſuppoſe I muſt attend Mrs. Weldon, Sophia, and Miſs Dudley. On ſecond thoughts, I will incloſe the letter; you can return it when you write to me again. Poor Sir Philip! He is indeed an object of pity. May his

fate

fate prove a warning to the votaries of diſſipation and folly! Adieu, dear Maria! pray make my compliments to Mr. Maynard, Mr. Hammond, and the Ladies who were ſo kind as to honour me with their notice in your neighbourhood. I remain ever unalterably,

Your affectionate friend,

H. MELVILLE.

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(Incloſed in the preceding.)

To Miſs MELVILLE.

Cavendiſh-ſquare.

VERY urgent you may be aſſured, my lovely Miſs Melville, muſt be the motive that detains me an hour from you; and I am perſuaded you will pity my ſituation, when I tell you I have juſt been witneſs to a ſcene that has ſenſibly ſhocked me. It is rather extraordinary to be called upon to attend two dying perſons in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time; but good God! how widely different is their behaviour! The one all reſignation and compoſure, the other labouring under the ſevereſt conflicts

imaginable

imaginable of dreadful guilt and deep remorſe. Yes, my Harriett, I am now at the houſe of Sir Philip Clendon; he is dangerouſly ill; yet what is the diſtemper of his body to the anguiſh of a wounded conſcience? I was preparing to attend my Harriett, when I received a note from Cavendiſh-ſquare, written by Sir Philip's ſteward, imploring my immediate attendance. What could I do? Inclination prompted me to ſet out for Richmond; compaſſion to an unhappy man, once my valued friend, urged me to reſiſt the impulſe of my ſoul. I conſidered, that your brother would dine with you; I could trouble him with this letter, and it would ſhew you how reluctantly I diſmiſſed my chaiſe, which takes him from hence, and ſtood at the door to carry me to the moſt lovely of women. I have in vain endeavoured to ſooth the anguiſh of this pitiable invalid; in vain I repreſent the mercy of his Maker: he is deaf to all conſolation, and gives himſelf up the victim of miſerable deſpair. There is certainly a Something upon his mind that affects him ſenſibly; I muſt endeavour to obtain his confidence; but the violence of the fever will, I fear, fatally prevent

prevent his relation of the cauſe that at preſent ſeems to overwhelm his ſoul. He now calls for me. Adieu, my Harriett. I ſhall ſend this with my carriage, directly, to your brother's lodgings. O believe me to be ever,

Your faithful and affectionate,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

MANY circumſtances have engroſſed your Harriett's attention, and prevented her writing to the friend of her heart: I have been tormented with doubt and ſuſpenſe. The weather proving unfavourable, the party conſented to defer their intended excurſion on the water; and believe me, I greatly rejoiced at it. Why ſhould I conceal the weakneſs of my ſoul? I honeſtly confeſs I cannot partake of amuſements with real pleaſure, without the preſence of Sir Henry: Yes, Maria, I do ſincerely love him. Think then what muſt have been the emotion of my heart, when I re-

I received the following anonymous billet! I knew not what to think. O how was I agitated! but I have as yet concealed it from every one: even Sophia is ignorant of my perplexities. Read it, before I proceed.

MADAM,

TO behold so much goodness and virtue abused by artful duplicity—to behold such unlimited confidence as you repose in the honour of a villain made a sacrifice to his vile proceedings, is a scene too painful for a feeling breast to bear. Permit an unknown friend to warn you of your danger; and may what I am about to say rescue you from a fate, that otherwise must inevitably plunge you into wretchedness. Yes, Madam, Sir Henry Clarendon is a deceiver; he makes you believe, that his absence from Richmond is occasioned by necessity, and that the calls of humanity and friendship are the only motives that detain him from you. 'Tis true, indeed, his friend Sir Philip Clendon is dangerously ill, and every one imagines he cannot recover. But can you suppose Sir Henry solely devotes his hours to the melancholy

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of a ſick chamber? No, madam, though a plauſible, this is a falſe pretence; and under the maſk of benevolence, he enjoys uninterrupted felicity with a young lady, who at preſent ſhall be nameleſs. Allow me, however, to obſerve, it was chance that threw her in his way. Sir Henry, it ſeems, not long ſince, reſcued this now happy lady from the attack of an hired villain, who would have carried her off for the infamous purpoſes of his maſter; and his ſucceſs on this occaſion has but too fatally diverted his attention from every former claimant. I could not ſee the virtue you poſſeſs made a dupe to an artful deſigning man, without acquainting you how much you are deceived. If you are wiſe, you will drop all connection with one of the moſt abandoned of his ſex; and I doubt not, you will bleſs the hand that has ſo timely prevented your falling a ſacrifice to ſuch conſummate wickedneſs. A ſacred regard to virtue is the only motive that could induce me to be the inſtrument of this ungrateful news. Be prudent; take no notice that any one has written to you; only be upon your guard, and determine not to give a heart ſo ſpotleſs as your own,

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to an unworthy wretch, who is ſo baſely devoted to the charms of novelty, in his addreſſes. I am certain you will excuſe a liberty, to which nothing leſs than its own gratification could have ſtimulated the heart of

AN UNKNOWN FRIEND.

Well, Maria, what can we think of this billet? indeed it has given me many pangs; yet do not ſuppoſe I let ſuſpicion triumph over my reaſon. Sure it is impoſſible, that my dear Sir Henry can be falſe! The vows he has made, the proteſtations he has uttered of eternal fidelity, and the kind attention he has ever ſhewn your Harriet,—all theſe are not the ſole baſis on which I found my hopes of his conſtancy. Mere vows and proteſtations are light as air; they coſt nothing to a thoughtleſs mind, and are eaſily formed; but it is the noble ſincerity of his manner, his general actions, his whole conduct, that incline me to think he muſt be faithful; and that the billet is written by the pen of malice, dictated by a diſappointed heart: nay, I am the more confirmed in my opinion, when I reflect on his behaviour yeſterday. Yes, Maria,

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he came yeſterday for an hour or two, and gave us ſuch an account of his unhappy acquaintance, as is really affecting. He ſays he has written to Mr. Hammond on the ſubject; and as this gentleman is at preſent with you, Sir Henry commiſſions him to ſhew you and Mr. Maynard thoſe parts of his letter which curioſity may incline you to peruſe. I endeavoured to maintain a placid countenance during Sir Henry's ſhort viſit; I looked at him, and thought it impoſſible he could act baſely. Time will ſhew me the real truth; but I am ſure he cannot be that hypocritical villain which the anonymous writer would inſinuate! Away then from my heart ſuſpicion, and all her perplexing train: nor let me harbour in my breaſt unworthy notions of Sir Henry, till I have much plainer proofs of his inconſtancy. In the mean time, the letter I received, ſhall never be produced. Thus, if the perſon who wrote it be my enemy,—and I ſuſpect a rival, by the hand,—ſhe will find her ſcheme entirely miſcarry. For the preſent, I ſhall act very deliberately, and am but the more confirmed in my reſolution of not marrying till my uncle Melville arrives in England. Caroline is

ſtill

ſtill with us; indeed ſhe is a lovely girl; to-morrow ſhe returns to Windſor. If Mr. Hammond is with you, pray make my compliments to him. I remain with due affection,

Your real friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

Parſonage-houſe.

I Am greatly in your debt, dear Harriett, for ſeveral agreeable letters, and receive your gentle reproof as I ought. I have been lately very remiſs, but you muſt excuſe my negligence: Conſider, my time is greatly engroſſed with the important duties of a wife and miſtreſs of a family; and when become a mother, what ſhall I do then? Ah, Harriet, the time is approaching! but I will not reflect; yet is it not very hard that we muſt be confined ſo long?—a whole month! how ſhall I ſupport it? However, I have three months liberty. I aſſure you, I am greatly reſtrained;

ſtrained; I muſt not walk far; I muſt not do twenty things agreeable to my inclination. Bleſſed effects of matrimony! and yet my temper is at this minute ſo cruel, that I ſincerely wiſh my dear Harriett may be exactly ſituated as I am before this time twelve-months! Tell me not of waiting till the arrival of your old uncle—Fooliſh excuſe! Forgive me when I ſay, I laughed heartily at reading the billet; aſſure yourſelf it is dictated by diſappointment and revenge. You ſerve the infamous author right: in my own mind I gueſs who wrote it. You ſee Sir Henry is much admired; I dare ſay ſome loveſick damſel, finding her advances ſlighted by him, has taken this method to hinder, as ſhe fancies, your intended nuptials. How low, how groveling are thoſe minds, who, becauſe they cannot be happy themſelves, take every opportunity of diſturbing the felicity of others! Sir Henry's motive for ſtaying in London is generous. Unhappy Sir Philip! amidſt his faults, his malady excites compaſſion.

Mr. Hammond is not gone; he hourly expects a letter from your charming Harry. You may be very thankful that I am

married, otherwiſe I do think you would find me a powerful rival. Pray give my kind love to Sophia; I cannot help wiſhing your brother and ſhe were to make a match; I am ſure her eſteem is deeply engaged; does ſhe ſtill attend the little bird? I dare ſay nothing would tempt her to part with it. Charles behaved very gallantly: he is certainly good tempered, and who knows but he may ſoon ſee the errors of his conduct? Poor Charlotte Parker! Indeed I greatly ſympathize with her. Do you never hear from the cruel aunt? How little ſenſibility muſt ſhe have! for even had her niece been doubly guilty, had her fault been ever ſo great, ſurely, when repentance and humility ſue for pardon, theſe powerful advocates ought not to be reſiſted. But in this caſe, innocence, truth, ſincerity, and meekneſs, all plead with irreſiſtible perſuaſion.

Adieu, dear Harriett! Make my compliments acceptable to my Richmond friends, and be aſſured that I ever will be,

Your affectionate friend,

MARIA MAYNARD.

Sir

SIR HENRY CLARENDON to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

London.

I Received your letter, dear George, and as you expreſs a curioſity about poor Sir Philip, I will endeavour to gratify it. On my firſt viſit I was greatly ſhocked to behold him reduced to ſo miſerable a ſituation. What availed the ſplendour of his houſe, his immenſe fortune, his numerous domeſticks, or the richeſt apparel of his almoſt-unequalled wardrobe? Alas! the pooreſt peaſant, in an humble cottage, was far happier than he. When I entered the room, he thanked me for attending ſo wretched a being. I approached his bed. Good God! What were my ſenſations? The very man who a few days ago was the picture of happineſs, I now beheld reduced to a deplorable condition indeed. Where was the vivid bloom of health? How altered were thoſe eyes, that uſed to ſparkle with vivacity! Alas! the gay, the ſprightly Sir Philip Clendon was ſunk down to the neceſſity of being confined by the

rude attack of a rapid diſtemper: a cruel fever cauſed the dreadful change. I endeavoured to conſole him; he was deaf to conſolation. Never ſhall I forget his deſpairing looks. "Clarendon, ſaid he, forbear to comfort a wretch deſtitute of hope, and unworthy of its balm. O that I might be ſpared! Surely I may recover; I am young, and I have had a good conſtitution;—but if I die, what will become of me? I have diſbelieved every thing divine; I have even dared to doubt the exiſtence of a God, and from this madneſs of theory, I may date all my deſpair; for ſo ſoon as I encouraged theſe ſentiments, I feared not to commit ſin. I vainly imagined that no one took account of my actions; and this quieted, or at leaſt ſtupified for a while the powerful pleadings of conſcience. Good God! what will become of me? But, ah! how dare I call upon a name, which I never yet invoked, except on profane occaſions! O Clarendon, do comfort me, if it be yet poſſible! and forgive my ſending for you. But"——Here, George, he fainted; the violence of his agitations overcame him: proper means were uſed for his recovery; he called for me, and again intreated me to comfort him. I repreſented

preſented the mercy of our Maker, the benignity of our Redeemer, but, alas! all I ſaid availed nothing: he ſeemed as one entirely abandoned to deſpair. Juſt at this inſtant the Doctor entered: my poor friend intreated him to ſay whether there were any hopes of his life. Dr. A. evaded the queſtion, but being again earneſtly enjoined to ſpeak the truth, he frankly told his unhappy patient, that he ſaw very little hopes of his recovery. The good Doctor expreſſed himſelf in the gentleſt terms, and I am perſuaded nothing but the great earneſtneſs of Sir Philip would have induced him to pronounce ſo unreſervedly his opinion: The ſick man appeared extremely vexed at what Dr. A. ſaid, and exclaimed, "If half my fortune could purchaſe health, how gladly would I give it!"

The fever increaſed greatly all that day; at times he was delirious. I only retired to ſcribble a note to my lovely Harriett, and he called for me with great earneſtneſs. It is thought he cannot recover: he has frequently endeavoured to confeſs ſomething, which ſeemed to lie upon his ſpirits. I greatly fear the powerful calls of con-

ſcience diſtreſs him: indeed, George, my mind is perplexed: compaſſion, nay I will add, friendſhip, detains me here, whilſt inclination and love would draw me to Richmond. My preſent ſituation is certainly a true ſtate of mortification and ſelf-denial, but I am perſuaded Harriett cannot be diſpleaſed with my attendance on Sir Philip. Her noble mind is ever ready to pour the balm of comfort, and adminiſter conſolation to thoſe who are in need of it. I muſt not therefore refuſe to follow ſo bright an example. Adieu, for the preſent.

Tueſday.

I had not time to write a line yeſterday, being ſo much engaged with this moſt pitiable man: I hardly left him a minute. Ah, George, he is no more; his ſoul has forſaken her earthly habitation, and winged her flight to the unknown regions of eternity! May our gracious Maker be merciful!

I hinted to you that I thought Sir Philip had ſome affair upon his mind: too ſurely he had. Poor wretch! how did ambition undo thee! I was ſitting by his bedſide, endeavouring

deavouring to conſole him, when he graſped my hand, ſaying, "You have been, you are indeed my true friend: prepare to hear a ſtory which muſt make you ſhudder; perhaps I ſhall be eaſier when I have related it!—Eaſy, did I ſay? Vain thought! But you will ſee that my terrible apprehenſions are not groundleſs."

His voice ſometimes as he ſpoke was almoſt inarticulate, and the violence of his agitation I believe haſtened his death. I will not pain myſelf to relate the affair exactly in his words, the ſounds of which ſtill haunt my ears; but the purport of it is as follows. Sir Philip Clendon was the nephew of Sir Thomas Clendon, who was, perhaps, without exception, the moſt unfeeling of men, and as the old gentleman increaſed in years, his temper became more unbearable. Before he died he went into Dorſetſhire; Sir Philip attended him; and how ſhall I relate what followed? Alas, my friend! This unhappy young man, hurried by ambition, uſed ſuch means as ſoon ended the life of his uncle. I was ſo aſtoniſhed at this recital that I had not power to ſpeak. Sir Philip perceiving my ſurpriſe, added, "Have I

not then reaſon to dread my approaching fate? Curſed be that ambition which induced me to act ſo diabolically! O how impatient was I to inherit an eſtate that has never yet yielded me one minute's pleaſure; if my uncle had been more cruel than he really was, what authority had I to"——

He was again ſeized with a violent fit, and when he came to himſelf ſtarted every moment, as if he beheld a frightful ſpectre. He ſoon after proceeded, ſaying, "You ſee, Harry, what a wretch I am; what a miſerable wretch I have ever been; for however gaiety and vivacity may have ſeemed to dwell on my countenance, language is inadequate to deſcribe the feelings of my heart. Ah, what a deceiver have I been! You thought I acted honourably by Lady Rayner. Alas! I was then plotting the ruin of another, which made me unwilling to exaſperate the injured huſband. The night before, I ſaw a young lady: I fancied I loved her; and as there were no hopes of ſucceeding with Lady Rayner, I determined to abandon the attempt. Miſs Villars has no fortune; ſhe is entirely dependent

pendent on an old uncle; and from a very little converſation with her, I ſaw I ſhould have no difficulty to prevail on her to live with me as a miſtreſs: a gleam of comfort ſhines on my mind, when I reflect that I have not been acceſſary to this young lady's ruin." My uncle! my uncle! (he exclaimed) and looked at me with ſuch excruciating marks of horror, that I was obliged to retire. When I entered the room again, he ſaid "One favour more, Harry, and then I have done: never let my ſiſter be acquainted with what I juſt related; her ſenſibility is ſo great, that I am perſuaded, did ſhe know my crime, the grave would ſoon have another victim. Write to her, tell her of my death as tenderly as you can. She is now in Dorſetſhire, at that very houſe,—yes, perhaps, in the very room where I, with fatal ſucceſs, firſt ſtabbed my ſoul's repoſe." He could not proceed; it is needleſs to repeat the aſſurances I gave him of my complying with his requeſt; you may likewiſe ſuppoſe that I endeavoured to calm his ſpirits, by repreſenting the mercy of the Almighty to true penitents. But, alas!

he little heeded any thing I ſaid; he only replied, "It was too late for repentance; he had too many crimes, to think of pardon from One, who muſt be ſo juſtly incenſed, and that he expected the dreadful puniſhment of a miſerable eternity." I told him he ſhould not deſpair; but I might as well have forbidden the winds to blow, as have hoped to ſoothe the tempeſt of his mind. Suffer me to draw a veil over the following ſcene. I cannot recite it; I am greatly fatigued, and will only add, that he died at eight o'clock this morning. I have already written to his ſiſter; ſhe is an amiable girl. Adieu for to night.

Wedneſday morning.

I have had very little ſleep; the idea of this unhappy mortal, whom I once called my friend, prevented my repoſe. Poor man! How early is he taken off the ſtage of life! Little did I think he was ſo guilty; he ever appeared gay in company. Alas! Perhaps he thought diſſipation would ſilence the reproaches of his conſcience! What will not ambition do? I ſuppoſe he was tired of being reſtrained by

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the caprice of an old man, and therefore executed his ſhocking intention. But far be it from me to recriminate: henceforward let the irremediable affair be buried in oblivion with the author of it; and may the gracious Father of the univerſe deal mercifully with his departed ſoul!

Three o'clock.

O, George! read the following letter: and then tell me if I have not reaſon to be miſerable. It is dated from Richmond.

SIR,

I am perſuaded you will excuſe my writing to you, when I aſſure the moſt abandoned of men, it is the laſt time he ſhall ever be troubled by me. I will not enter into a detail of the affair that occaſions this change in my ſtile. It is ſufficient to ſay, I will never ſee you more: Never will I liſten to the enſnaring flattery of a falſe tongue; attempt not therefore to ſee me; if you preſume to approach this place, be aſſured I will ſeek a diſtant aſylum. I have reaſons for my determination, which for your own ſake I ſhall not

enumerate. I have likewiſe given orders to have all your letters returned, before I ſee them, ſhould you write to

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

What ſhall I do, George? Forbidden to ſee her! Debarred writing to her! Called the moſt abandoned of men! It is inexplicable—I am diſtracted—How ſhall I act? Too ſurely, ſome cruel enemy has repreſented my conduct erroneouſly. I will not yet intrude upon her preſence, neither will I ſuffer the mortification of having my letters returned: O my beloved Harriett! how you have wounded the peace of your Clarendon! If my abſence will render you happy, I muſt tear myſelf from you for ever. Cruel girl! What invidious ſlanderer has told you tales, which can only have been invented by the tongue of malice. I aſſure you, George, I ſhould greatly ſuſpect a certain lady here-abouts of ſpreading ſtories to my diſcredit, did I not know that ſhe is out of town.

Well as I once eſteemed Sir Philip, and ſtrongly as the calls of compaſſion pleaded for my attendance on him, could I have known, that by ſo doing I ſhould loſe

ſo

ſo bright a jewel, believe me, I muſt have reſigned the painful taſk to ſome other perſon, whoſe mind was leſs embarraſſed. Adieu, dear George! let my perplexed ſituation excuſe all inaccuracies. I remain,

Your faithful friend,

H. CLARENDON.

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Miſs MASHAM to Miſs FREELOVE.

London.

REJOICE with me, dear girl, at my ſucceſs in an undertaking which has cauſed me very little trouble to execute. Without farther preamble, I fancy I have ſeparated Clarendon from his beloved damſel: I wrote a letter to him in her name, forbidding his viſits and all future connexion. You will perhaps wonder how I could deceive ſo ſagacious a fellow; have patience and you ſhall hear. Sir Harry has been very much in town lately, on account of a ſick friend; I really did not think Clarendon ſo ſtupid a creature, to leave Harriett for the dreary gloom of a ſick chamber; but

but, however, I will proceed to tell you how I have managed him. From my earlieſt infancy you know I always delighted in ſcribbling, and imitating the hand-writing of others, inſomuch that you often told me, joking, you believed ſome day or other I ſhould be taken up for forgery: I have copied your hand-writing ſo exact, that you frequently have been ſurprized at the deception. Some time ago Miſs Melville wrote me a card, on account of an engagement that ſhe put off, and as therefore I could imitate her writing pretty cloſe, a lucky thought came into my head to write to Sir Henry as from Miſs Melville, which I did, hinting ſome myſterious reaſons for ſo doing, and peremptorily refuſing to ſee him or receive any letters. The ſcheme has ſucceeded: poor Harry is gone into the country, and I ſuppoſe Harriett is mourning his loſs at Richmond. Undoubtedly you will ſay this ſcheme may ſucceed for the preſent, but ſoon the fallacy will be found out. Perhaps ſo, perhaps not: Harriett may be piqued at his behaviour, and, actuated by revenge, marry Mr. Ryley, a gentleman who lives at Richmond, and as I am informed is paſſion-

ately

ately in love with her; but this cannot happen unleſs the mournful Henry is kept diſtant from his too lovely miſtreſs.—Should they meet, my ſcheme is fruſtrated, and in that caſe Hampſhire will receive me immediately: It is thought I am there already, ſo that no ſuſpicion can ariſe in Sir Henry's mind on my account. Adieu. I remain,

Yours, &c.

H. MASHAM.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

INDEED, Maria, my preſent ſituation is very ſingular; I am wretched, for Sir Henry is unfaithful. You are acquainted by Mr. Hammond with the death of Sir Philip Clendon: immediately as it happened, Sir Henry ſet out for Dorſetſhire, as Charles informs me, who has called at his houſe. This is very extraordinary: he has not written me a line; and will he prove falſe? Then ſurely men are all deceitful! Diſtracting thought! What can be his motive for acting thus? To complete

plete my misery, I am pestered with the compliments and particular attention of Mr. Ryley, a gentleman who resides here. O, that I could divest my heart of partiality for the ungrateful Sir Henry, and I would become the wife of Mr. Ryley! Heavens! what a thought! Wife, did I say, of Mr. Ryley! No. If Sir Henry prove false, let some sequestered desart for ever receive me; there would I end my days, and hourly call upon the unfeeling stones to witness my fidelity.

Miss Clendon lives in Dorsetshire; perhaps the immense accumulated fortune she will now possess, may———What would I say? My pen involuntarily drops from my hand. I cannot proceed.

Ten o'clock.

Prepare, Maria, to hear a mystery, which I am sure it is not in my power to unravel: After tea, this evening, as I sat with Mrs. Weldon, Sophia, and Charles, in the back parlour, a servant delivered my brother a letter. He read it very attentively, and with great composure said, "Pray, Harriett, can you inform us why Sir Harry is gone into Dorsetshire? But

here,

here, read this letter, you will ſee he refers us to you for an explanation." Before I proceed, Maria, peruſe the letter:

"Dear SIR,

My ſudden departure from London muſt appear extraordinary to my Richmond friends; but when I have the pleaſure of ſeeing you, I will be more explicit. I dare not addreſs your ſiſter—let her tell you why. Amidſt all the torments I undergo on her account, aſſure the lovely Harriett of my unalterable attachment: But if I am not worthy of her regard, I will not offend her by my preſence. I ſhall ſoon be in town after I have ſettled ſome affairs of the late unhappy Clendon. Be aſſured, dear ſir, I remain,

Your ſincere friend,

H. CLARENDON."

When I had read this myſterious letter, I thought I ſhould have fainted. Mrs. Weldon aſked me if I knew what it meant? I aſſured her I did not, and that I was aſtoniſhed at the contents. Much converſation paſſed on the ſubject, but no one could gueſs the reaſon of this ſtrange epiſtle.

Alas,

Alas, my ever-valued friend! what ſhall I do? Little as I heeded the billet I lately received, ſigned an Unknown Friend, my boding heart now tells me it is too true;—and yet, the circumſtances do not agree. Sir Henry ſays, "he is not worthy of my regard." Ah, Maria! what can he have done, to make him behave in this ſtrange manner? Indeed I am perplexed and uneaſy; nothing gives me pleaſure: this delightful place, the beautiful gardens, the charming walks by the river's ſide, have all loſt their beauty; the tempeſt of my mind renders every thing diſagreeable. I muſt not omit mentioning that Charlotte Parker returns to London to-morrow: She is in ſo much fear of ſeeing my brother, that I think her ſpirits will be more compoſed with good Mrs. Foſter.

Lady Rayner has written me a very lively letter, though ſhe ſays the country is almoſt inſupportable. Adieu, for the preſent! Believe me to be, in much anxiety,

Yours,

H. MELVILLE.

From

From the SAME to the SAME.

Richmond.

A Whole week have I ſpent in the cruel tortures of ſuſpenſe: Sir Henry is come to town, but has not been to Richmond. My brother was ſuddenly called into Northamptonſhire, and when the myſtery will be unravelled I cannot tell. To-morrow we go to town, in order to join a party at Ranelagh. What pleaſure can the diſſipated crowd at this once agreeable place afford me? Surely, Sir Henry is either the moſt capricious, or the vileſt of men! How often has he ſworn eternal fidelity to your Harriett, in the very ſummer-houſe which I now behold from my window! How often has he vowed unſhaken conſtancy! and I, deluded by the flattering ſemblance of veracity, fatally believed his promiſes. Mr. Hunter, whom I believe I have formerly mentioned, is to be of our party to-morrow evening: his uncle lately died, and has left him an independent fortune. He appears greatly attached to Sophia, and has actually made propoſals to Mr. Weldon on her account; how he will ſucceed, time muſt

muſt determine. I have talked with Sophia on the ſubject; ſhe cannot alledge any particular objection, but is extremely averſe to the offer. I know not what concluſion to draw from thence, but can partly divine her reaſon.

Do not you think that my ſituation is very ſingular? I thought I was beloved by an amiable man, with ſuch open unreſerve, —nay he had frequently given me aſſurances of his love,—that it would have argued a very ſuſpicious mind to have doubted it: nor did I heſitate to return ſuch indications of my eſteem as were conſiſtent with delicacy and candour. And now he ſlights me! deſpiſes, inſults, abandons me! perhaps for another. Indignant thought! Again and again have I aſked my own heart, if in action, word, or look, I have behaved unbecomingly—Indeed, my dear friend, this fooliſh heart entirely acquits me; I cannot think I have ever overſtepped the bounds of that deportment, which feminine decorum juſtly preſcribes. But, I may be too ſelf-partial! And yet, in general, Maria, conſcience is a faithful monitor; nay, ſhe always acquits or condemns, when rightly examined.

Mr.

Mr. Hammond, I ſuppoſe, has left Devonſhire: I dare ſay Sir Henry acquaints him with this, his extraordinary behaviour. Oh, my ever-valued friend! I fear the author of the billet had too much reaſon for writing to me, And is Sir Henry Clarendon a villain, a traitor? Forgive my weakneſs, but the idea is atrocious; it is inſupportable! it cannot be:—Suſpenſe torments the mind more than certainty. Would to heaven I were reſolved! I am determined to excuſe myſelf to-morrow: Ranelagh can appear to me but a mockery of my feelings, and utterly diſagreeable, eſpecially as Mr. Ryley it ſeems is to be of the party. Shall I produce the letter? Yes; I will ſhew it to Mrs. Weldon and Sophia. Adieu, dear Maria! Pity your friend,

H. MELVILLE.

Miſs MASHAM to Miſs FREELOVE.

ALL goes on well, dear Betſey. Sir Henry, I believe, is not in town; at leaſt I have not ſeen him. Miſs Melville is,

is, I imagine, complaining of his inconſtancy, at Richmond. I have lately been a cloſe priſoner, as Sir Henry thinks I am in Hampſhire. I believe I ſhall venture to Ranelagh this evening. O that I could meet him there with pleaſure! my heart and fortune are at his ſervice. I muſt now retire to dreſs. Good morning, dear girl. I remain, yours, &c.

HESTER MASHAM.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

London.

O Maria! I am wretched indeed. Sir Henry deſpiſes me: it is but too glaring. I told you that I intended to excuſe myſelf from going to Ranelagh, but I was over-ruled. I complained of a head ach, invented twenty excuſes, and thought I had ſucceeded. But when Mr. Ryley and Mr. Hunter called to conduct the ladies to town, the former gentleman eagerly aſked me if I were not going? I replied, "No, ſir, I muſt finiſh this piece of embroidery, as it is to be ſent into the country early to-morrow morning." Mr. Weldon

Weldon ſmiled, and ſaid, "Harriett, if you ſtay at home, I am ſure I will not go out this evening; you and I will drink tea here:" Mr. Ryley ſtarted up—"No, ſir, ſaid he, Miſs Melville muſt permit me that pleaſure: Ranelagh will loſe its charms without her." Sophia looked as if ſhe wiſhed not to go without me. At this inſtant Mrs. Lalum and ſome ladies ſtopped at the door: it was early, and they alighted. "Bleſs me! cried Mrs. Lalum, are you not yet dreſſed, Miſs Melville? We ſhall be too late." I have not any thoughts of going out to night, ſaid I, and added my reaſons. They were all unanimous for entreating me to accompany them, excepting Mr. Ryley, who ſat grinning like a Chineſe figure, and rubbing his hands; as to be ſure he imagined I ſhould be left alone with him. "Nonſenſe, ſaid Mrs. Lalum; go with us, Harriett." What could I do? Had I ſtayed Mr. Ryley would not have gone: Believe me, I was far from being pleaſed with Mr. Weldon, for what he firſt ſaid. Well, added I, if you will let me go as I am, I will accompany the party, rather than detain Mr. Ryley—But indeed I cannot dreſs;

dreſs; if I put on a hat this gown will do. Mr. Ryley looked vexed, but ſaid, "Though, madam, you deny me ſo charming a *tete-a-tete*, I rejoice the point is carried againſt you, as it would deprive this company of great pleaſure were you to ſtay here." I bowed to this fooliſh ſpeech—put on my hat with a heavy heart—the chaiſes drove to the door, and we arrived in Albemarle-ſtreet about ſix o'clock. Ah, Maria! How different were my ſenſations when laſt I left this charming houſe! After change of horſes, the carriages again were ready, and Mr. Ryley inſiſted upon riding in ours. He was more diſagreeable that afternoon than ever. When we had taken ſeveral walks in the rotunda, and were juſt entering a box to drink tea,—gueſs my aſtoniſhment at ſeeing Sir Henry paſs by! It was with difficulty I avoided ſcreaming, and almoſt fainted: he ſaw my diſtreſs, yet never offered the leaſt aſſiſtance. Unfeeling wretch! thought I, when I recovered; am I become ſo very indifferent, ſo hateful to your ſight?—I ſaw little more of him. He ſat almoſt the whole night in an obſcure corner of the room, and whenever he

he walked about, his arms were folded; he appeared thoughtful, and, from whatever cauſe, did not look like any of the giddy throng: Nay, I could ſee he endeavoured to avoid me. O, Maria! what have I done to deſerve this treatment? or rather, how can he have acted? How unworthily muſt he have behaved, to produce a change like this, and cauſe him to ſhun me ſo ſtudiouſly! I ſhould have told you, that Mr. Weldon ſought a private conference with him after we had drank tea, but found him engaged in converſation with Miſs Maſham. She is really a fine woman; they were talking very earneſtly. We return to Richmond tomorrow morning. Write ſoon, I beſeech you, dear Maria! and ſoothe the unſpeakable perturbation of

Your affectionate friend,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Sir HENRY CLARENDON to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

London.

My dear FRIEND!

YOU may ſoon expect to ſee me; nothing in London ſhall long detain your unhappy Clarendon. Alas, George, Miſs Melville, in one word, hates me! I met her yeſterday by chance, and at ſight of me ſhe almoſt fainted. What were my feelings at that inſtant? But how unconnectedly I write! Firſt let me tell you where I ſaw her: My mind had been ſo unſettled, and I felt myſelf ſo diſcompoſed, that I really was a pitiable object. Solitude only increaſed my vexation; books were irkſome, and ſelect company diſagreeable. I therefore determined to mix with the gay unthinking crowd at Ranelagh; in vain hoping that this once-favourite ſcene would diſſipate the cloudy ideas which had taken poſſeſſion of my mind. Little did I think the only jewel I valued would have graced this airy place with her preſence. I had juſt taken one round, when ſeating myſelf near

near the door, I beheld Miſs Maſham enter, ſurrounded with a train of ſycophants. I really thought ſhe had been in Hampſhire, but took not the pains to make myſelf known to her, though ſhe ſoon ſought an opportunity of rendering me the moſt miſerable of men. In about a quarter of an hour the Weldon family, joined by ſeveral ladies and gentlemen, amongſt whom was Miſs Melville, paſſed me. At that very moment I could have taken her in my arms—and execrated the reſtraints of prudence. She looked beautiful, but though it was only a momentary glance, I perceived a dejection on her lovely countenance. She wore a genteel undreſs, which, in my mind, triumphed over all the ſtudied apparel of the greateſt beauties there. Her gown was a ſilver muſlin, and a chip hat ſhaded the moſt brilliant eyes in the world. Oh, Hammond, excuſe this prolixity! but when you become a lover, you will think no ſubject too trifling, if a Harriett Melville be the object. Mr. Ryley appeared extremely attentive to her: Surely ſhe will not heed his aſſiduities! Too fatal for my peace, ſhe has! As I paſſed through the crowd, I ſaw the party

enter a box, and was near enough to ſee my Harriett led in by Mr. Ryley. I paſſed on; ſhe ſaw me; exclaimed "Sir Henry!" in a terrified accent, and almoſt fainted. I had not power to aſſiſt her. I ſtood motionleſs for ſome time; but, recollecting that my preſence could only add to her uneaſineſs, inſtantly withdrew. I perceived many of my acquaintance in the boxes as I paſſed along, and ſtudiouſly avoided ſpeaking to them; then ſat myſelf down, muſing on my unhappy ſituation; The company and all the ill-ſuited gaiety around, ſo far from exhilarating my ſpirits, ſeemed only to increaſe their vexation. I was ſoon rouſed from this reverie by Miſs Maſham, who accoſted me in her uſual manner; I returned her ſalutation I believe rather aukwardly. "Hey-day! cried ſhe, how you are altered! Who would think that Miſs Melville ſhould be in the ſame place with Sir Henry Clarendon, and he not by her ſide?—but I fancy I can gueſs the reaſon of it. Mr. Ryley will be the happy man at laſt." She uttered this with ſo contemptuous an air, and looked ſo ſelf-ſatisfied, that had I never before diſliked her, ſuch behaviour at that inſtant

inſtant muſt have made her truly deſpicable. I had no time to anſwer, for ſhe immediately joined the party ſhe had left. Pity your unhappy friend! Direct me what to do; but how can I act? My Harriett hates me. Diſtracting thought! Surely women are all capricious! Who would have imagined that ſo much diſguiſe could lurk under the bewitching, the ingenuous countenance of a Miſs Melville? Benevolence ever ſeemed to guide her looks, to point her words,—and even before ſhe ſpoke, every virtue appeared written in her face: But, ſhe is falſe, tyrannical, capricious, and abſurd. Henceforward no more will I truſt to appearances. Fatally am I convinced of my error: and oh, that I could tear the too lovely image from my breaſt! that I could caſt her from me for ever! But, it is in vain: this divine creature obliges me to adore her, and binds me ſtill her ſlave. Had you but beheld her laſt night! Had you but ſeen how much ſhe ſurpaſſed the crowd of flutterers around me, you would not wonder at my miſery. I ſaw Mr. Ryley hand her to the coach,—ſaw him get in with her; whilſt I, as a miſerable outcaſt, went home

ſullenly, alone, and almoſt ſtupid with reflections, that preſented no clue to ſolve the tormenting myſtery. If ſhe prefers him, far be it from me to hinder their union—What have I ſaid? It cannot be! Excuſe this rambling ſtuff. I have written, and cannot reviſe it: Attribute it to the juſt cauſe; I am ſo totally deranged, that very ſoon you will ſee

The miſerable

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to C. MELVILLE, Eſq.

Dear CHARLES,

I AM ſorry you are detained longer in Northamptonſhire than you intended to ſtay, as it deprives us of the pleaſure of your company at Richmond. Sir Henry is gone to viſit Mr. Hammond: God knows when he will return! You give me inexpreſſible pleaſure, my dear brother, at the change of your conduct. May you ſoon ſee the errors that are paſt, and your life may yet be amiable! Be not offended at my freedom; but your welfare

fare is ſo infinitely dear to me, that I cannot help either cenſuring or commending you, as occaſion requires. I am perſuaded precepts and advice are irkſome to the generality of the younger part of mankind. The diſſipated ſcenes of pleaſure too often eradicate good impreſſions, and reflection frequently comes ſo late, that it is ineffectual. And what, my brother, is the fleeting phantom you purſue? Does it yield ſolid ſatisfaction? Does it render—aſk your own heart—does it render you happy and contented? The gaming table, and all the various other faſhionable amuſements of the artful and abandoned, are ſurely deſpicable employments for a rational being. But granting, for a moment, that pleaſure and her enchanting train could give a real ſatisfaction to her votaries; nay, let us ſuppoſe there were not any thing in this world preferable to extravagance, luxury, and diſſipation; why, even if it were ſo, experience would ſoon ſhew the inſtability of all human felicity, and when the gay ſcene is changed, whither muſt we fly for comfort! Fortune is uncertain; extravagance will ruin the nobleſt eſtate.

Diſſipation enervates the moſt manly mind; and luxury and intemperance may ſoon reduce the ſtrongeſt conſtitution to a reſtleſs bed of ſickneſs. But, even without ſeeking it ourſelves, the gay and the healthy are frequently unwilling victims to the grave. The numberleſs diſorders incident to mankind, ſhew us how impoſſible it is to ſecure a long exiſtence. I know, my dear Charles, you muſt have been keenly affected at the death of your gay companion, Sir Philip. The ſenſibility of your heart muſt have excited you to lament his loſs. I will not tire you with the reflections that crowd upon my mind at this inſtant; but you muſt know, that had You been called to an heavenly tribunal, inſtead of Him, you would have found yourſelf very unfit to appear before the Eternal Judge of right and wrong. Let the fate of Sir Philip Clendon warn every unthinking being, not to place a confidence in ſublunary enjoyments. A few weeks ſince, health, fortune, and worldly proſperity were in his poſſeſſion. Ah! Charles, whither are they fled? or rather, whither is he fled from them? He is gone,—from whence he never will

return;

return; his remains are conſigned to a narrow ſpace of ground, inſtead of being at liberty to range in this tranſitory world. Surely ſo recent an example muſt avail more than precept! Let it ſilently admoniſh you, my brother. Liſten to its voice; it will more eloquently perſuade than the fineſt preacher. Perhaps you will ſay, "What then, am I for ever to reflect on theſe diſmal ſubjects? Is my life to be embittered by thinking on the uncertainty of it?" Should you reaſon thus, you greatly miſtake my meaning; but permit me to obſerve, that reflection, to a good mind, far from depreſſing the ſpirits, elevates the ideas, and harmonizes the ſoul. There are innocent pleaſures of which certainly we ought to partake: for, as a juſtly admired poet obſerves—"to enjoy is to obey." Yet we are not ſo totally to devote ourſelves to pleaſure, as to forget the more important duties of life. Each individual has a particular path marked out for him by his Creator, and it is therefore certainly incumbent on every one to walk circumſpectly. Far be it from me, Charles, to recommend to you the moroſe principles of

a cynic. The great Author of nature delights to ſee his creatures happy: He has given us the means; and thoſe only are truly miſerable, who pervert the underſtanding which God hath beſtowed, by indulging every vicious inclination, and by letting paſſion triumph over reaſon. You may rally me if you pleaſe, and call this a ſermon: You may uſe all the witty arguments you can to confute me; but ſtill I will hope, that the natural propenſity of your mind to virtue, muſt ſoon convince you how very trifling are all witty repartees, when levelled againſt ſerious and intereſting ſubjects. In the cooler moments of reflection conſider of what I have written, and let not the giddy multitude draw my only brother at once from virtue, true pleaſure, and ſolid happineſs. God bleſs you, dear Charles! Believe me to be, ſincerely,

Your affectionate ſiſter,

H. MELVILLE.

Mrs

Mrs. MAYNARD to Miſs MELVILLE.

Parſonage-houſe.

POOR, dear Harriett! how ſadly ſhe is uſed! abſolutely forſaken! totally abandoned by her lover! Take a noble revenge and marry: Yes, do, marry Mr. Ryley. Now I know you are angry. Well, believe me, I do not mean you ſhould follow my advice; but, ſuppoſe your ſagacious friend has found out the reaſon of your Henry's behaviour. Attend, and I will tell you what I ſuſpect. You ſome time ago received an anonymous epiſtle; perhaps the ſame malicious writer has favoured Sir Henry with one likewiſe, and has treated your character juſt as tenderly and freely as his. If this be the caſe, the riddle is explained; and though Sir Henry will appear a credulous ſimpleton, yet you can no longer accuſe him of inſincerity, caprice, or cruelty. Then will you triumph over him, and demonſtrate your affection, which could not be ſhaken by an anonymous letter. Try, dear Harriett, and come to an explanation; and ſo ſoon as he arrives in town;

write to him on the ſubject,—or ſhall I write to him for you? Believe me to be deeply intereſted in your welfare, and though I write in ſpirits, I have been ſenſibly affected by what you have lately ſuffered. Mr. Maynard joins with me in every affectionate wiſh, and I remain,

Yours, &c.

M. MAYNARD.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

THANK you, my dear friend, for your advice, but at preſent I am unable to follow it. Sir Henry is yet in the country, and if he were in town, I am ſure I ſhould not have courage to write to him. Ah! Maria, that you had found the real cauſe of his ſtrange behaviour! But, on mature reflection, it cannot be! he would at leaſt have written to me. Surely his love might have prompted him to have taken a laſt farewell. O, my dear friend! I wiſh I had your charming

ing ſpirits; indeed I am truly dejected; I am inceſſantly tormented with the aſſiduities of Mr. Ryley—though I gave him yeſterday, I think, a deciſive anſwer.

Charlotte Parker is very ill. It is thought ſhe is in a deep conſumption: dear girl, how I pity her! How are you, Maria? Do you find yourſelf pretty well? I have a great mind to viſit you, and try if I can forget my miſery. Yet, why ſhould I burthen you with my ſorrows? O, Heaven grant me patience to undergo this ſevere trial! I find my affections are too deeply engaged to play the heroine, and fear I ſhall never overcome my partiality for Sir Henry. Miſs Maſham is now at Richmond, on a viſit to a friend of her's. You cannot think how civil ſhe is to me, but I ſhall never eſteem her ſufficiently to make her my confidante. Sophia has juſt now been ſadly vexed: this morning at breakfaſt Mr. Weldon acquainted her with the propoſals of Mr. Hunter, and added, "Who knows, Sophia, but you may be married before Harriett?" She bluſhed. "Indeed, ſir, I do not deſire it; and you will oblige me exceedingly by not mentioning this ſubject any more; I am now very

very happy, but if I marry, who can inſure my felicity?" "I expected this reply, ſaid Mr. Weldon; it would not become young girls to ſay yes, the firſt time of aſking; I leave it to your mama to talk with you on the ſubject; but remember, if you expect my favour you will comply." Saying this he left the room. Poor Sophia burſt into tears: "O, mama, cried ſhe, urge not your poor girl to what would render her miſerable. Indeed I will never marry. Mr. Hunter is very deſerving; may he find a worthier object to beſtow his affections upon! Indeed, madam, I can never marry him." Mrs. Weldon knew the reaſon of this vehement refuſal, and could not wonder at her agitation, but begged Sophia to be compoſed, in which intreaty I joined. Indeed, Maria, I pity my ſweet friend. I well know her father's temper: it is inflexible in things of conſequence, and I fear he will not eaſily relinquiſh his purpoſe: however, I begged her not to oppoſe her father ſo violently, as it would only exaſperate him. Mr. Hunter is an amiable young man, and probably would have rendered Sophia happy, had ſhe not been prepoſſeſſed in favour

vour of my brother. I have ſome notion Charles regards her with partiality. Who knows what time may produce? I cannot ſay I feel well, yet I know not my complaint. I have juſt written to Lady Rayner; we ſhall very likely pay her a viſit before the ſummer is paſt. Miſs Spenlove is with her ſiſter, Mrs. Laſum. We are excellent neighbours; but, ah! what are all the bleſſings of life, if daſhed, as we often experience, with bitter diſappointment! I remain, ever unalterably,

Yours, &c.

H. MELVILLE.

Sir HENRY CLARENDON, to the Rev. GEO. HAMMOND.

London.

I Arrived in town laſt night, but cannot ſay I am eaſier. You ſaw the ſituation of my heart; you have been witneſs to my ſufferings; I need not, therefore, deſcribe my feelings. Alas! I thought I ſhould be eaſier in London, as now I have

have a chance of ſeeing the friends of the beloved of my ſoul. Young Melville has been in the country, or I ſhould have ſought an explanation from him; I intend calling at his lodgings this morning, and ſhall endeavour to find out the cauſe of his ſiſter's behaviour. I will go immediately.

Two o'Clock.

I found Mr. Melville at home, juſt returned from Northamptonſhire. After the uſual compliments, I told him I was come to make good my promiſe; that is, to explain the cauſe which induced me to write him ſo haſty a note: "I doubt not, ſaid I, Miſs Melville has reaſons for this very ſingular deportment; and you, I imagine, are acquainted with them. My going into the country immediately upon the death of poor Clendon is, I hope, attributed to the right cauſe; for be aſſured, the fear of offending her by my preſence was the only motive that could have induced me to leave a lady ſo deſervedly dear to me. Yes, ſir, I ſtill love your charming ſiſter, if poſſible, more than ever; and what ſhe has ſeen in my conduct lately, to produce in her

her own demeanour ſo great a change, is to me aſtoniſhing!" "I do not underſtand you, replied Melville; and inſtead of being explicit, you redouble my aſtoniſhment! If Harriett had ſpoken as you have done, I ſhould not have wondered; but you, Sir Henry, have uſed her ill. Without any juſt cauſe, to forſake her ſo contemptuouſly, is a proceeding which even I, wild as I am, ſhould bluſh to be guilty of towards any woman." I deſired him to be moderate; and added, "I come not here to incenſe you, but amicably to take a laſt farewell. I ſee you are not the confidant of your ſiſter, otherwiſe you would not be ſurprized at what I have ſaid. *I* forſake her contemptuouſly! Heavens, what an expreſſion! But here, ſir, read this letter, which ſhe wrote me, as you ſee, previous to my leaving town; and then judge if I have uſed her ill." I gave him the fatal letter; he read it with a variety of emotion, and replied, "Surely Harriett is ſtrangely capricious, to write in this manner, and then pretend to bewail and lament your loſs!" "And has ſhe lamented me? Whence then is all this myſtery? This

action

action ſurely does not correſpond with her generous ſentiments."

"Aye, ſhe has lamented you indeed: before I went out of town ſhe was always in tears, but yet could never bear to hear your name mentioned. The beſt method will be to bring you together: but why did ſhe debar your writing to her?" He pauſed, walked about the room, and at laſt ſaid, "Well, Clarendon, you muſt ſee her; but we will not ſurprize her this evening; tomorrow morning we will ſet out early for Richmond. Faith, I think you muſt both appear like ſimpletons; ſhe for puniſhing herſelf by giving her lover pain; and you for not inſiſting upon ſeeing her, notwithſtanding this romantic letter, immediately on receiving it. I have more confidence in your honour, than to ſuppoſe you capable of what ſhe accuſes you; and perhaps your conduct may have been erroneouſly repreſented to her."

I replied, I ſhould not have imagined that his ſiſter was diſpleaſed with my attendance on Sir Philip. "But why, ſaid I, cannot we go to Richmond this evening?"

"That is true; well, Sir Henry, I'll order the coach at four o'clock, and this evening

evening Harriett ſhall ſee you. It is much eaſier to preach than to practiſe. If any body elſe had behaved as ſhe has, ſhe would have given them a fine lecture, and muſt certainly have thought their proceeding capricious. Here is a letter ſhe wrote to me; read it."——I did ſo; he proceeded, "You ſee her ſentiments are noble. There muſt be ſome miſtake in this affair."

Ah Hammond! there is indeed, I fear, a fatal miſtake. This letter, addreſſed to her brother, appears written by the pen of virtue, guided by tenderneſs and ſincerity. Aſtoniſhing then, that Miſs Melville, who can ſo well correct the failings of another, ſhould act entirely oppoſite to every ſentiment connected with reaſon and common ſenſe! Will my once amiable Harriett give me cauſe to ſuſpect all the ſex of deceit and caprice? You will eaſily imagine my impatience till four o'clock. I ſoon took my leave,—and here I muſt conclude. Adieu for the preſent; believe me to be your's, truly,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs

Miſs MASHAM to Miſs FREELOVE.

I Have not written to you lately, as nothing particular has happened ſince my adventure at Ranelagh. I ſuppoſe you received my letter, giving you an account of my unexpected meeting with Sir Henry. I believe he is now in the country; may he continue there! but this I cannot expect:—and if Miſs Melville ſhould ſee him, my ſcheme is entirely fruſtrated. Indeed I begin to think myſelf a great fool for writing as I have done: had I reflected a moment, I muſt have ſeen the improbability of ſucceeding; as it may be imagined Sir Henry will ſhew the letter to Miſs Melville's friends: but it was my impetuous temper hurried me to act ſo imprudently; and ſhould I now be detected—away, reflection! it now comes too late. They will not certainly ſuſpect *me* to have written the letters. Sir Henry thought I was out of town at the time. I was at Richmond laſt week for three or four days on a viſit to a friend; and to my unſpeakable ſatisfaction, I frequently beheld Miſs Melville inwardly lamenting (as her countenance clearly

clearly betrayed) the inconſtancy of Sir Henry. She is not the girl ſhe was; her vivacity has forſaken her entirely; and whenever ſhe ſmiles it appears quite conſtrained. Adieu! dear Betſy; I remain,

Your's,

H. MASHAM.

Sir HENRY CLARENDON to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

WE went at the appointed time to Richmond, and within half a mile of Mr. Weldon's houſe, it grew overcaſt, and a violent ſhower of rain fell, accompanied with thunder and lightning. In the midſt of the ſtorm, I perceived two ladies ſtanding under a tree, which afforded them very little ſhelter. Mr. Melville ordered the man to ſtop immediately, and we both ſprang out of the coach, and ran towards the ladies. But, O! Hammond, what was my ſurprize, when I beheld Miſs Melville, and Miſs Weldon! I had hardly power to ſtir; but Charles burſt out a laughing, and

ſaid

and ſaid, Well, ladies, if Sir Henry chooſes to ſtay here, permit me to conduct you to the coach. This rouſed me: I caught Miſs Melville's hand, and haſtily drew her after me, whilſt Charles took care of Miſs Sophia. Soon as we were ſeated, my Harriett exclaimed, "Is it a dream? or do I behold Sir Henry and my brother?" "Did I not tell you, cried young Melville, what ſimpletons you would both appear? you may thank me, Harriett, for bringing Sir Henry to Richmond." "I am ſorry, replied his lovely ſiſter, that Sir Henry Clarendon ſhould want ſo much perſuaſion; I ſhould have thought, after what has paſſed"—I interrupted her; "If, madam, I now offend you with my preſence, I am the moſt miſerable of men! but if you will deign to hear me, you will find it was indeed owing to your brother, that I now have the happineſs of ſeeing you. I ought not to have ventured into your preſence after the letter I received; you perhaps are acquainted with the reaſons that occaſioned it; I own myſelf entirely ignorant of its meaning: nor can I imagine who has repreſented"—"Sir, ſaid ſhe, interrupting me, you need not trouble yourſelf

ſelf to explain what you cannot underſtand; if your affection for me is ſo ſlight, that the foundation can be broken merely by ſuch a letter as I ſuppoſe you have received, you are greatly fallen in my opinion."

"What can you mean, madam?—for heaven's ſake be more explicit!"

"Can you want an explanation, Sir Henry?" replied ſhe, ſweetly bluſhing.

"Yes, faith, ſiſter, cried her brother, I think you ſhould explain yourſelf; for I am ſure Sir Henry imagines you to be very capricious. He has ſhewn me ſuch a letter, that I do not wonder at his behaviour; though I own, before I ſaw it, my indignation was greatly raiſed againſt him. "Have you the letter about you, Clarendon? let my ſiſter review it."

I took it from my pocket, but ſhe diſdainfully refuſed to look at it, ſaying, "I have likewiſe received a letter, but I now bluſh to own I placed an undeſerved confidence in your honour."

The carriage ſtopped; and Sophia, who had not ſpoken, ſaid, "Indeed, Sir Henry, this behaviour is very extraordinary." I had not time to reply: the ladies, quick as thought, ruſhed into the houſe, ran up ſtairs,

ſtairs, and, I ſuppoſe, acquainted Mrs. Weldon with what had paſſed. How myſterious this appeared! The unfeeling Charles only laughed at my uneaſineſs, and made ſome witty ſpeeches, which, as they were ſo unſeaſonable, I little attended to.

We converſed afterwards with Mr. Weldon on the ſubject, who promiſed there ſhould be an explanation at tea-time, for he could not think Miſs Melville would have behaved ſo ſtrangely without reaſon. Mortified as I was at the innuendo, I curbed my reſentment. Tea was ordered, and the ladies ſummoned, but Mrs. Weldon and her daughter only appeared. The ſervants were diſmiſſed, and the following converſation began.

"I hope, ſaid Charles to Miſs Weldon, you will not take cold by the rain you were expoſed to; but I ſee you have changed your gown, and I hope Harriett has followed your example: is ſhe coming to tea?" "I believe not, replied Miſs Sophia, ſhe deſired me to make her excuſes; ſhe is rather indiſpoſed." "But, indeed, we will not take any excuſe, ſaid Charles; why, Clarendon is on the rack of impatience to unravel the myſtery."

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"This point may perhaps be better diſcuſſed without her, ſaid Mrs. Weldon; I underſtand, Sir Henry, that the reaſon of your long abſence from Richmond was occaſioned by an anonymous letter:—have patience, hear me out: I will not enlarge on your credulity, in believing the aſperſions thrown upon a character ſo untainted as Miſs Melville's, but I ſincerely hope an explanation will evince how injurious was the leaſt ſuſpicion of a conduct ſo wholly amiable!"

"You aſtoniſh me, madam, replied I; I do not comprehend your meaning. Is this an anonymous letter? taking Miſs Melville's letter from my pocket; read it, madam, aloud, and I think I ſhall not be accuſed of credulity: You ſee, it is ſigned at full length with the fair one's own name!" She read it; when the epithets of, aſtoniſhing! ſurprizing! echoed from every mouth.

"Is it poſſible, ſaid Mrs. Weldon, that Harriett can have written this letter? Sophia, my love, pray go, and endeavour to perſuade her to come down ſtairs; tell her the reaſon of the entreaty, and urge it as my particular requeſt."

Miſs Weldon immediately left us; and till ſhe returned, every one was making comments on this moſt inſcrutable affair.

At length ſhe entered the room, accompanied by my Harriett; who inſtantly ſunk down in a chair, overwhelmed, as I thought, with confuſion: I too was really confounded beyond all expreſſion, and felt an agony of ſuſpenſe, to ſee Miſs Melville ſo circumſtanced. At laſt, with a dignity which ſhe aſſumed very unexpectedly, ſhe ſaid,

"I find, madam,—addreſſing herſelf to Mrs. Weldon,—that I am accuſed of having written a letter to Sir Henry Clarendon, forbidding his preſence. If indeed he thinks I did ſo, it partly accounts for what he mentioned in the coach; and could I have been guilty of ſo diſingenuous a behaviour, believe me I ſhould be overpowered with guilt and confuſion. After having avowed my eſteem, I might truly have appeared inſignificant and trifling to a very ridiculous degree; but, conſcious of perfect innocence, I dare boldly affirm, that I ſhould bluſh to have ſported with the patience of Sir Henry. Permit me to add, it would be repugnant to my own feelings; it was ever im-

impoſſible for me to have acted ſo tyrannically. And now, Sir, let me ſee the letter you mentioned; perhaps I may preſent you with one, which, though it will ſurprize you, muſt demonſtrate the ſincerity of my profeſſions, when my eſteem could not be ſhaken by the malicious hints thrown out againſt your character. I may have ſpoken my mind too freely; but ſurely ſincerity is preferable to a falſe delicacy."

O George! Miſs Melville never appeared to greater advantage than while ſhe ſpoke; each lovely feature was animated; and when ſhe ſaid ſhe eſteemed me, the fineſt bluſh overſpread her countenance, and beautifully heightened the vermilion of her cheek!

"Celeſtial roſy red, love's proper hue!"

She received the letter; and having read it with great compoſure, continued, "Now, Sir Henry, tell me really, can you think me capable of writing in this manner? But why do I aſk? Has not your conduct tacitly confeſſed it?" Then, looking on the letter again, "I wonder, ſaid ſhe, to whom I am obliged for this nice imitation of my

hand-writing. Appearances are againſt me: But tell me, Sophia; do not you know the inmoſt receſſes of my heart? Have I ever betrayed to you the leaſt diſtant idea of behaving ſo capriciouſly?" Sophia anſwered, "I am aſtoniſhed indeed: But can your queſtion require an anſwer? All who are acquainted with you muſt know what different ſentiments actuate your heart! But pray, Harriett, ſhew Sir Henry *your* letter."

Mr. Weldon, who had remained a ſilent ſpectator, exclaimed, "Aye do, Harriett; let us ſee what he ſays to that. But I muſt pour my own tea out I ſee, or I am not likely to be ſerved by any of you." So ſaying, he moved towards the table, and in his hurry overſet the urn, but luckily eſcaped the boiling water. All this prevented our proceeding, till the ſervant having adjuſted this little confuſion, I intreated Miſs Melville to let me ſee the letter; ſhe gave it me, and I here encloſe you a copy. I looked at her with aſtoniſhment; begged her to pardon my credulity, as ſhe termed it, and added, Though, madam, I now ſee my error, yet you muſt allow

allow your hand-writing is ſo well imitated, that you cannot wonder at the aſtoniſhment and diſtreſs under which I tore myſelf from you. I take heaven to witneſs, with what reluctance I obeyed your commands, and how miſerable I found myſelf, when I beheld you at Ranelagh, and ſtanding there, as I imagined, a painful object, was debarred ſpeaking to you! What muſt you have thought of my conduct? Every word muſt have appeared true to you in this diabolical letter; and, will you pardon me, if I own I thought your behaviour not a little extraordinary?"

"I dare ſay, replied ſhe, you did, ſir; you muſt have been deſtitute of feeling had you not deemed me tyrannical and capricious. You cannot now doubt but the letter addreſſed to you is forged."—"O my Harriett, permit me to ſolicit your pardon for having allowed it too ready a confidence, utterly unworthy of your known character! Your preſent noble conduct entirely correſponds with the general tenor of your actions: Would to God I knew the author,—if ſo foul a being yet exiſts on this ſide hell! Yet, whoever wrote it muſt

be below reſentment: Every line now expoſes to my view a ſpirit ſo atrociouſly malignant, that contempt is the beſt method of treating the vile incendiary." "Pardon me, ſir, ſaid Charles, I do not agree with you; ſuch villainy ought to be puniſhed: and did I know the writer, I would this minute revenge my ſiſter. But perhaps it was written by a female: I think the fair-ſex's invention in theſe affairs——

"Nay, don't proceed with ſuch rapidity, cried Sophia; you are going to throw out ſome unpolite ſpeech: But pray, why ſhould you ſuſpect it to be written by a woman?" He was about to anſwer her, when Mr. Weldon exclaimed, "How ridiculous! Inſtead of rejoicing at this happy diſcovery, you begin arguing and ſurmiſing. I warrant the writer will ſoon be detected: You ſee it is one well acquainted with Miſs Melville, by the cloſe imitation of her hand-writing; and I doubt not but that both letters were the bleſſed production of the ſame pen."

He then went up to Harriett, took her hand, and preſenting it to me, "Here, Sir Henry, receive Miſs Melville from her guardian;

guardian; and henceforward let no forged firebrands diſturb your peace." I joyfully received her hand, preſſed it to my lips with a tranſport of joy too big for utterance;—and thus ended this affair.

How have I injured my Harriett in ſuppoſing her culpable! and yet, George, had I not ſome reaſon? But what language can paint my admiration of this amiable girl, who on the receipt of the letter, which taxes me with a character my ſoul abhors, inſtead of heeding the falſhood, continued to treat me in her uſual manner; nor till ſhe apparently had an open proof of its being true, would deign to regard it with uneaſineſs?—But, when I ſeemed to have forſaken her; when I ſaw her at Ranelagh, my behaviour muſt have appeared contemptuous indeed. What has ſhe not ſuffered on my account! Be it now my conſtant endeavour to make her happy. Who the perpetrator of all this buſineſs is, I cannot tell or deviſe; diabolical ſcheme! We ſpent the evening very pleaſantly; after tea a walk was propoſed in Richmond Gardens, where we were joined by two gentlemen, Mr. Hunter and Mr. Ryley;

the latter I find has been extremely attentive to Miſs Melville; he appeared not a little ſurprized at ſeeing us together;—I may add, rather diſcontented. I wonder not at it, for who can behold my Harriett without admiration! Her charming perſon, her winning manner, and engaging deportment ſtrike every beholder with aſtoniſhment: but Mr. Ryley is the laſt man in the world that I ſhould chooſe for a rival: there is a cloſeneſs in his diſpoſition towards his own ſex, and he treats the other as if only formed to pleaſe him. He never doubts of ſucceſs, and, I am informed, but ill brooks the repulſe Miſs Melville has given him.

I go to Windſor to-morrow, and ſhall ſtop at my aunt's, who is juſt returned from the country: I hope ſoon to introduce Miſs Melville to her; but you know Lady Anne's character ſo well, that I almoſt dread a meeting. Her ideas are ſo high, that ſhe may think I greatly demean myſelf by an union with this moſt amiable of women! I believe my dear kind aunt would ſacrifice every thing to a title; but did ſhe know Miſs Melville's excellence,

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it could not fail to change her opinion. I am very thankful to find that I am independent of her. When Lord F—— died, ſhe became the miſtreſs of an immenſe fortune, and it is certainly in her power to increaſe mine very conſiderably: but I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf, could I let this motive deter me one minute from proſecuting my intention, the firſt and worthieſt object of my heart. I greatly fear ſhe will propoſe Miſs Dudley's living with her, when this amiable girl leaves ſchool; but I never will conſent, as I am perſuaded Lady Anne F——, though my aunt, is a very improper woman to initiate an inexperienced girl into the world. I ſhall rejoice to ſee Caroline: Of late my mind has been ſo occupied, that I really had not either time or inclination to viſit Windſor. Adieu! dear George: Believe me

Your's affectionately,

HENRY CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

Richmond.

BY this time, my dear Maria muſt have received an account of laſt week's explanation: Do you not congratulate me?—But, believe me, I am greatly diſturbed at the wickedneſs of the author of theſe vile billets: my hand-writing is ſo exactly copied, that I really looked at it with aſtoniſhment.

Sir Henry is gone to Windſor, to welcome home Lady Anne F——, his aunt; and I have commiſſioned him to bring Miſs Dudley here on his return.

I am perſuaded by all my friends not to defer the ceremony till my uncle arrives in England: What ſhall I do, Maria? Adviſe me ſincerely. Charles is in town; I wiſh he would not be ſo particularly attentive to Sophia; it frequently diſtreſſes her.

Sir William and Lady Rayner are expected here next week; ſhe writes me word that ſhe is quite tired of the country. Tomorrow we go to town, to exhibit at Ranelagh; Sir Henry has promiſed to meet

meet us there. Ah, how different will that place appear to me! I wonder what is become of my illneſs;—it ſeems entirely fled. I am ſummoned to ſupper. Adieu.

Ever your's,

HARRIETT MELVILLE.

Sir HENRY CLARENDON to the Rev. GEORGE HAMMOND.

London.

I Left Windſor this morning, and ſhould now immediately ſet out for Richmond, but I am to meet the Weldon family this evening at Ranelagh. I muſt deſcribe to you my interview with Lady Anne F——: I accoſted her in my uſual manner; ſhe returned my ſalutation with rather more politeneſs than cordiality, and with very little preamble, ſhe began:

"So, nephew, I hear you are going to be married." I bowed. "I think, proceeded ſhe, you are in a vaſt hurry; but

pray, who is this perſon, that is to be ſo highly honoured?"

"You little know the lady, madam, you are ſpeaking of, otherwiſe I am perſuaded your ſtile would be greatly altered. 'Tis true, ſhe is not dignified with a title: but her numberleſs accompliſhments render ſo incidental an acquirement of very little moment."

"Fine talking indeed! replied Lady Anne; pray where did you pick her up? But you know beſt, ſir, I ſuppoſe: Well, keep this creature to yourſelf, and preſume not to introduce her to me. I think ſhe was the daughter of a country eſquire; what a gothic taſte! Refuſe earl's daughters, and marry a plebeian! But, ſir, you are now quite independent: for my part, I always thought it highly improper to leave young men's fortunes ſo wholly at their own diſpoſal."

In this manner ſhe ran on, inveighing againſt me for ſo debaſing myſelf! I heard her very patiently, and then replied:

Do you imagine, madam, that happineſs conſiſts in an immenſe fortune, and that titles can confer felicity? With all the

the deference due to Lady Anne F——, I muſt confeſs my ſentiments do not coincide with hers. As to concealing Miſs Melville, it will be impoſſible: The lady who honours me with her hand, has certainly a right to be treated as my wife; though I am perſuaded ſhe will not intrude herſelf into your ladyſhip's preſence, till it be agreeable. The young ladies you mention, and whoſe parents condeſcended to think of an alliance with me, were very deſerving; but as they could not touch my heart, I ſcorned to marry either of them for the ſake of their noble fortunes. Miſs Melville has every requiſite to render the married ſtate happy; and the beauty of her perſon is very inadequate to the manifold accompliſhments of her mind. "Now you fancy that an admirable ſpeech, nephew, I dare ſay; do you think you ſhall talk thus a twelvemonth hence?" I am glad your ladyſhip is inclined to raillery: Suppoſe I were to ſhew you the picture of Miſs Melville, and then judge. She prevented my proceeding, and with ſome warmth, "No indeed, Sir Henry, I am not diſpoſed for raillery (drawing herſelf up:) the ſubject

ſubject is not of conſequence enough." She pauſed, and reddening exceedingly, added, "Really, nephew, I thought you had more ſpirit, than to condeſcend to marry a girl without a ſhilling! If your father were alive, he would not ſee you demean his family with impunity"—I interrupted her: "Certainly, madam, your ladyſhip is miſinformed; without a ſhilling!—Miſs Melville's fortune is conſiderable. Her father was indeed the younger ſon of a very ancient family: Miſs Melville has an uncle now abroad, immenſely rich, and who is expected in England very ſoon. As to my father, his conſent was obtained before heaven deprived us of him." I then recounted to her in what manner I became acquainted with Harriett, and aſſured her how much my honoured father approved of the alliance. Lady Anne ſhewed no ſmall aſtoniſhment at what I had related, and ſaid, what ſhe heard concerning me was only from common report; but the reaſon of her not doubting the truth, was becauſe I had not conſulted her in the affair. Much more ſhe added, and we at laſt parted,—better

pleaſed,

pleaſed, I believe, on both ſides, than when we met. I cannot conceive to whom I am indebted for reports ſo injurious of my Harriett. Lady Anne likewiſe mentioned that ſhe heard Miſs Melville was at Mr. Weldon's, as a companion to his daughter; and that ſhe was entirely dependent on her brother, whoſe character was that of a profeſſed libertine, and a gameſter.

Lady Anne's diſpoſition is very oppoſite to that of my dear mother's, whoſe candour and benevolence extended to all deſerving objects, whether diſtinguiſhed by birth and fortune, or placed in the humbleſt ſtation: but my aunt, though a good ſort of woman, is too much led away by the ſplendour of proſperity; and as ſhe thinks it below her dignity to converſe with thoſe who are not in the ſame ſituation of life with herſelf, you will not wonder at the contempt ſhe ſhewed when I mentioned to her my intended connection. I imagine ſhe felt extremely mortified at the thoughts of receiving Miſs Melville for a niece; but when I had related the matter of fact againſt rumour and report, her reſerve vaniſhed

niſhed by ſlow degrees; dear curioſity ſeemed then to preponderate in her heart, and at laſt ſhe owned an impatience to ſee the lady I had choſen. On Thurſday I am to introduce my Harriett to her: it is impoſſible but Lady Anne muſt be charmed with her; and then, as her ladyſhip is extremely violent in loving and hating, I could almoſt ſuppoſe that Miſs Melville may become a great favourite. Caroline is very well; ſhe came to town with me, and is now gone to Albemarle-ſtreet. Adieu, dear George. I remain your faithful friend,

H. CLARENDON.

Miſs MELVILLE to Mrs. MAYNARD.

London.

WELL, Maria, we went to Ranelagh; I never paſſed a more agreeable evening. Sir Henry was in high ſpirits, and gave life to all our party: Miſs Dudley attended us, and was greatly delighted; the ſcene was entirely new to her. Mr. Hunter

Hunter conſtantly walked by Sophia, though ſhe always evaded his attention: Charles was rather grave, and left us at eleven o'clock. You ſee by this letter we are ſtill at London: we do not think of returning to Richmond till Friday, as to-morrow I am to be introduced to Lady Anne F——. I have not ſeen Miſs Maſham lately; her violent friendſhip for me is, I ſuppoſe, a little abated; indeed I have ever found it like a tertian ague, troubleſome and various. Poor Charlotte is very ill, and though not confined to her room, ſhe will not, I am afraid, live long. This morning Sir Henry knocked at the door, juſt as ſhe went out: he aſked me who that melancholy young woman was that paſſed him; I believe I looked very fooliſh, my cheeks glowed, and I begged him not to enquire any thing about her, —fool that I was to behave ſo! Surely I might have evaded his queſtion without intereſting his curioſity farther; but I had been ſo ſenſibly affected by a converſation with Charlotte, that I irreſiſtibly dropt a tear, which would not be denied its tribute, notwithſtanding all my efforts to oppoſe it.

He

He caught my hand, and in the tendereſt manner, aſked pardon for the pain he had occaſioned; "My intruſion, ſaid he, may be blameable, but your ſorrows are mine; and if it be in my power to aſſiſt in ſoftening the concern that now oppreſſes you, I hope, my Harriett, it is needleſs to aſſure you with what pleaſure I ſhall obey your commands." "Sir, replied I, your generoſity confounds me, but the misfortunes of that young woman you ſpeak of cauſed me to ſhed the tear of ſympathy: her griefs are poignant, nor can you or I mitigate their anguiſh: There are reaſons why I cannot explain the cauſe, and I am perſuaded you will not urge me to converſe on a ſubject ſo diſtreſſing." He reſtrained his curioſity, and replied, "I acquieſce, dear Miſs Melville, nor can I wiſh you to communicate to your faithful Clarendon what you deſire to conceal." I endeavoured to change the ſcene, and we converſed on various topics, particularly on the interview with Lady Anne. "She is, added he, a good-natured woman, but vanity is her predominant foible; violent in her friendſhip, and very apt to like

like or diſlike at firſt ſight. I ſhould not have mentioned this to you, were I not convinced Miſs Melville's perfections muſt irreſiſtibly compel Lady Anne to admire and eſteem her." Notwithſtanding the gloſs which he endeavoured to ſpread over the character of her ladyſhip, I perceive her diſpoſition is very different from her nephew's; but I will not pretend to form a judgement till I have ſeen and converſed with her. Miſs Dudley will return to Windſor with Lady Anne: Caroline is a ſweet girl; I feel greatly attached to her, and flatter myſelf ſhe eſteems me, as much as our ſlight acquaintance will allow. Charles called in this morning, juſt as poor Sophia had been talked to by her father on the ſubject ſhe deteſts,—the addreſs of Mr. Hunter: he had perſuaded, and threatned, whilſt ſhe only anſwered with tears. Mrs. Weldon is generally ſilent when this topic is introduced, but, if ſhe does ſpeak, endeavours to evade the queſtions propoſed to her, and ſays, ſhe thinks her daughter too young to enter upon the cares of life: This vexes Mr. Weldon, who fails not to exclaim, "Indeed, my dear, you are more to blame

blame than the girl herſelf; you encourage her in this perverſeneſs; ſuch an offer is not to be rejected: it is far above her expectations." And indeed, from his manner, he ſeems determined to make poor Sophia comply. Mr. Weldon is a good man, but his temper is obſtinate, and how this affair will end it is impoſſible to ſay. Sophia treats Mr. Hunter very coolly, ſometimes hardly with politeneſs, eſpecially if her father is abſent. This behaviour Mr. Hunter perceives, and it renders him very miſerable, for I believe he ſincerely loves Sophia: he is really an amiable man, yet how can I plead for him, when I know her heart is ſo engaged? I mentioned before, my brother called in Albemarle-ſtreet, juſt as Mr. Weldon had been perſuading Sophia to receive Mr. Hunter chearfully. She was in tears; Charles looked ſurprized, not to ſay concerned. He took her hand, and aſked her in the gentleſt manner what had cauſed her ſo much uneaſineſs? "Nothing, Sir," replied ſhe, and haſtily opened the door to retire. "Leave me not, dear madam; there is ſomething grieves you, and I am too much intereſted in your welfare,

ſare, not to wiſh to alleviate a ſorrow, which unuſually clouds your lovely countenance." This ſpeech was too much for poor Sophia: She ſunk down in a chair, and it was with difficulty I prevented her from fainting. "Good God! exclaimed Charles, what is the matter, ſiſter?" At this inſtant Mr. Weldon entered, "Still in tears, Sophia? I am ſure I may ſay, O what a plague is an obſtinate daughter! Now I'll be judged by you, Mr. Melville." He then told my brother what had cauſed Sophia's uneaſineſs, and added, "Try, Charles, your influence; perhaps you may perſuade her, though I cannot: I'll leave you three together; and remember, Sophia, what I ſaid this morning." My brother ſeemed greatly aſtoniſhed at what had been related, for I fancy he little thought that Mr. Hunter had paid his addreſſes in form. When Mr. Weldon had left the room, Charles cried, "No, I can never plead for Mr. Hunter, as it is diſagreeable to you, madam." He then walked about very thoughtful, and ſoon haſtily took his leave. Indeed, my dear Maria, I no longer doubt his partiality for

Sophia,

Sophia, though I never heard him ſpeak ſo plain: he always treated her with the familiarity of a brother; I wiſh he was more worthy of her, but I fear his diſſipated temper is ill adapted to render any woman happy! When he was gone, Sophia and I retired to our dreſſing-room, where ſhe burſt into tears, and as ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, "O Harriett, ſaid ſhe, what can I do? Have I not expoſed myſelf to your brother? What muſt he think of me? Shall I obey my father? Tell me, my dear Harriett! I will do as you adviſe." Believe me, Maria, I was greatly diſtreſſed at the earneſtneſs of this dear girl. Happily for me, Mrs. Weldon entered the room, and relieved my embarraſſment. Adieu! My beſt reſpects to Mr. Maynard. I remain, ever your's,

H. MELVILLE.

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